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# MODERN MUSICAL COMPOSITION

FREDERICK CORDER

LONDON

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# MODERN MUSICAL COMPOSITION

(CURWEN'S EDITION, 5679.)

## A MANUAL FOR STUDENTS.

BY

FREDERICK CORDER,
Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music.

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"The rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians know" *Browning.*

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# PREFACE.

This book is not written for the Amateur, the Critic, the Theorist or the Antiquarian: it is a wholly technical treatise and an attempt to supply the needs of the earnest music-student; needs which I have studied for over twenty-five years. To summarise one's own knowledge, to analyse and tabulate the works of the great masters of old, may be very interesting to the cultured reader, but I have found it of very little assistance to the learner. The student finds the idiom of the past irksome and repellent; it is the vernacular that he desires to learn: he does not wish to take as his models the unapproachable gods of antiquity, but his immediate contemporaries.

In previous writings I have unintentionally shocked the minds of some by pointing out faults in the works of great composers. The ignorant believe that a great composer cannot commit faults; the musician knows this to be a fallacy and I find that the student is much more strongly impressed by the blot on the brillant robes of the great artist than by a worse one on the garb of ordinary men. If I can help him in this or any other way it matters little if others consider me irreverent or presumptuous.

*F. C.*

# Modern Musical Composition

BY

**F. CORDER.**

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## CONTENTS.


Preface ..... Page 3
Introduction ..... " 4
Chapter I Of Rudiments - How to write a song ..... " 6
" II The short Pianoforte Piece ..... " 26
" III Extension of Melody ..... " 32
" IV Of Themes or Subjects in general ..... " 38
" V Plurality of Subjects: Form and Development ..... " 44
" VI Of Climax and Coda ..... " 50
" VII Slow Movements, Scherzos &c ..... " 55
" VIII Pieces with only one Subject ..... " 58
" IX The technique of Emotion ..... " 68
" X Of Resources: Originality: concluding remarks ..... " 84
Postscript ..... " 86

Appendix ..... " 87

# Introduction.

Musical Composition is the art of building musical phrases—portions of melody— into periods of greater extent than is natural.

The laws governing the structure of a symmetrical melody, or tune, are so simple that they may be acquired almost intuitively; but to construct music of greater scope than this requires conscious labour and considerable technical knowledge.

Composition is as much a constructive art as joinery or architecture and must therefore be practised consciously until long use and experience enable us to exercise our painfully acquired powers subconsciously. Yet nearly everyone begins with a vague idea that he has only to turn his eyes up to heaven, like a prophet in a picture, to be delivered of a musical work complete in all its parts. I would advise a perusal of Edgar Allen Poe's fine essay on *The Philosophy of Composition* as the most effectual antidote to this pernicious delusion. It is only possible for the long and highly trained expert to dispense with the search-light of ratiocination and it is very doubtful whether even he gains anything by so doing. But it is in the nature of the person of feeling to want to do everything by unbridled impulse, as it is in the nature of the intellectual person to love to fill up a form. The real artist—a combination of the two—reasons out his work first; then, having fashioned it in the rough, he re-writes and re-writes until the bare bones are quite hidden. I am aware that cold intelligence and hot enthusiasm are two oddly matched steeds for the chariot of Phoebus Apollo, but they must be taught to go in double harness, neither leading, but side by side and mutually helpful.

The Grammar of Music seems to me to be too often taught after the fashion of the grammar of Latin in our schools; that is, without any regard to its practical application. Music being the constructive art of sounds, it is clear that the first step in studying it should not be to acquire mere digital dexterity on an instrument, or ocular skill in deciphering hieroglyphics, but to train the ear to discriminate between sounds and to memorise all combinations of single and compound sounds. Yet this is seldom done, and nothing is more common than to find, even in these enlightened days, young people of 18 or so starting to learn Harmony, Counterpoint and even Composition without any power whatever of apprehending the sound of what they write. There is no reason why a course of systematic ear-training should not be undergone by every child, beginning at the age of 5 or 6, and continuing until the illusive signs of staff-notation at last appeal as clearly as letter-press to the eye and ear. In default of this preliminary training there is only one alternative. Dispense with writing as much as possible and force the (generally reluctant) pupil

to play all exercises on the pianoforte. *In learning music the eye is no help: only a hindrance.** One does not realize the truth of this until one has taught the blind. In order to be a musician the ear must be taught, firstly, to recognize time and the irregular patterns of notes in time which we call rhythm, — secondly it must be taught to appreciate the relative pitch of notes (not necessarily the absolute pitch), thirdly to analyze combined sounds and fourthly to retain the memory of music just heard while listening to fresh sounds and anticipating coming ones. That such powers are possible to the ordinary ear without special gifts I affirm most emphatically and can produce ample evidence of the fact.

Still, the ideally trained musician is a *rarâ avis* and needs no such book as this, which is intended to supply some of the deficiencies of his less fortunate brother. Most learners stumble along in a fog all their days: let us here endeavour to afford a few lamps for their enlightenment.

An Art cannot be studied as precisely as a Science, and Music, though it has its scientific side, is nowadays endeavouring to conceal the fact and to become an emotional stimulus and language, like poetry. Consequently it is not enough to study technique and technique only, as our forefathers did, leaving the cultivation of Beauty to our mere instincts.

Beauty is our one aim: purely scientific compositions — the Fugue, the Canon, the Motet and the Madrigal — no longer appeal to the modern mind, and the goal of our ambition is the orchestral tone-poem. Formerly when the student wrote something imaginative his teacher advised him to put it in the fire and to write a parody of a Mozart Sonata.** Today one would rather find out what his aims and intentions are — supposing him to possess any— and point out to him how such aims, or the nearest to them, have been achieved by other earnest minds and what are the technical means by which they can be carried out. But his nose must be firmly rubbed in the fact that every material result requires material means — that there is a technique for everything, including the portrayal of the subtlest emotions, and that no amount of "inspiration" or mental fine frenzy can obviate the necessity of learning how to handle the tools of one's trade, or employ the resources of one's art.

* I beg, therefore, that all the examples in this book may be played by the student – not merely looked at.

** This advice was frequently given to me in my student days some 35 years ago, and I believe the tradition of its usefulness yet survives.

# Chapter I.

## RUDIMENTS: HOW TO WRITE A SONG.

The reader must please have patience while I generalise awhile upon what is indispensable to be learnt, and why.

On examining any amateur composition whatever, the following faults will always be found to present themselves:

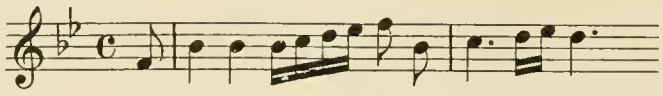
1: Poverty of resource in Melody: in a song the phrases are too even and stiff; the notes know not when or why to rise or fall. In an instrumental piece there is seldom any melodic phrase that is not repeated to weariness instead of being continued or contrasted with another. The cure for this is to practise making continuations to given melodic fragments.*

2: Poverty of resource in rhythm. The most prevalent fault of all. The simple anapœstic, iambic or trochaic sequence of accents once started is pursued in the same note-values instead of employing expansions or contractions. Given such a line as

*"When Britain first at Heav'n's command"*

the amateur could never conceive of any other setting than

such a rhythm as Dr Arne's



being beyond the scope of his invention. Yet a study of rhythm will presently disclose to him the unsuspected truth that, save in hymn-tunes and very simple airs, it is best not to set words in their actual metre.

3: Poverty of resource in Harmony. People rarely learn by instinct more than the sound of the Tonic chord and the Dominant Seventh; both only in the root position. The ear then has to be deliberately taught to recognise the sound of other chords, and especially, the good and possible successions of inversions. When a student can hear how his bass goes he is already half a musician. But this learning harmony, as it is styled, is the part of musical technique most studied, only it seldom goes far enough. To know the possible resolutions of the discords is only half the matter; a composer must know how to invent long progressions of chords tending to a given point.

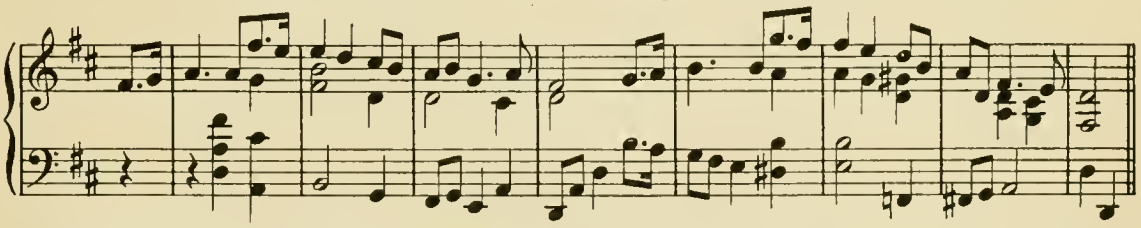
4: Poverty of resource in Counterpoint, or Part-writing. This shuts out the amateur from all concerted music save the rudimentary Anthem and Part-song, which are merely pianoforte harmony set to words.

5: Total ignorance of how to build up musical periods when these are not controlled by words— *i. e.* of instrumental music in other than the dance form. The art of averting a cadence and of extending a phrase, these are the most vital, because *unnatural* resources in our art. Here analysis of existing works is of great assistance, but it is of little use studying the old masters, however great, for this purpose. It is a question of acquiring the current idiom, and the student will find it therefore more helpful to dissect the music of Tschaikowski or Wagner than that of Mozart or Beethoven. The supreme workmanship of Haydn, as I shall have to point out later, can only be brought very indirectly to bear upon what *we* are striving to do. True, the methods are eternally the same, but in music the modern, practical details are whole worlds away from those of a century ago.

* See, for example, the author's Exercises in Harmony and Composition (publishers, Messrs Forsyth Bros).

Now let us cease moralising and start definite teaching. The average student— this is one more unavoidable generalization— instead of learning all these matters first, begins out of an odd sort of curiosity to "try and write something." The act of penmanship, the conventions of notation, and the conjuring up of music are, to his mind, one act instead of three: some phrase, which he fondly thinks he has invented, is found floating in his mind, and after a struggle with the difficulties summed up under the term "Elements of Music" he gets it down on paper somewhat thus:

but it absolutely refuses to go any further and he is completely ignorant of the methods of overcoming that refusal. At this stage one firmly believes that the whole invention of a piece is intuitive; that things — Songs or Symphonies — "come" or "won't come" and that if these inspired four bars were artificially converted into fourteen or forty the result would be valueless. The best way to combat this fallacy is to refer to the score of Wagner's *Meistersinger*. Turn to p. 31 (4$^{to}$ edition), where *Walter* and *Eva* are exchanging farewells. Then compare this four-bar phrase with the expansion of it into a 23-bar melody at p. 320 and this again with the glorified version at p. 445, where it is extended to no less than 32 bars, and I think you will admit that workmanship sometimes counts for more than inspiration. As a matter of fact any student with a modicum of the knowledge our tyro lacks could at least shew him how to convert his four bars into eight without any loss of beauty: *e.g.*



But would the embryo composer be edified and enlightened if the *modus operàndi* were explained to him? No: the shattering of the inspiration theory is a disagreeable shock which it takes some time to get over. If you further enquire whether he intended his first four bars to be slow or fast he will hesitate and suggest "rather slow." If you ask whether they were to be loud or soft he will hesitate and suggest "rather soft?" If you point out that they have no definite character and might be the beginning or end of anything he will be annoyed and say that he is sure that he has "no gift for composition." Do not then simply agree with him and tell him he had better stick to his piano, for you may be blighting the bud of a very nice talent: but point out that you were exactly in his position once, and so was Beethoven, for that matter. The best practice at this stage is to take fragments of other people's melodies and learn how these may be completed.

In continuing melodies the composition student will also be applying what he knows of Harmony and continually finding out how little that is. Again I comfort him with the assurance that clumsiness here is almost inevitable at first, and happy is the beginner whose ear is good enough to tell when to use or when *not* use a chord of six-four.

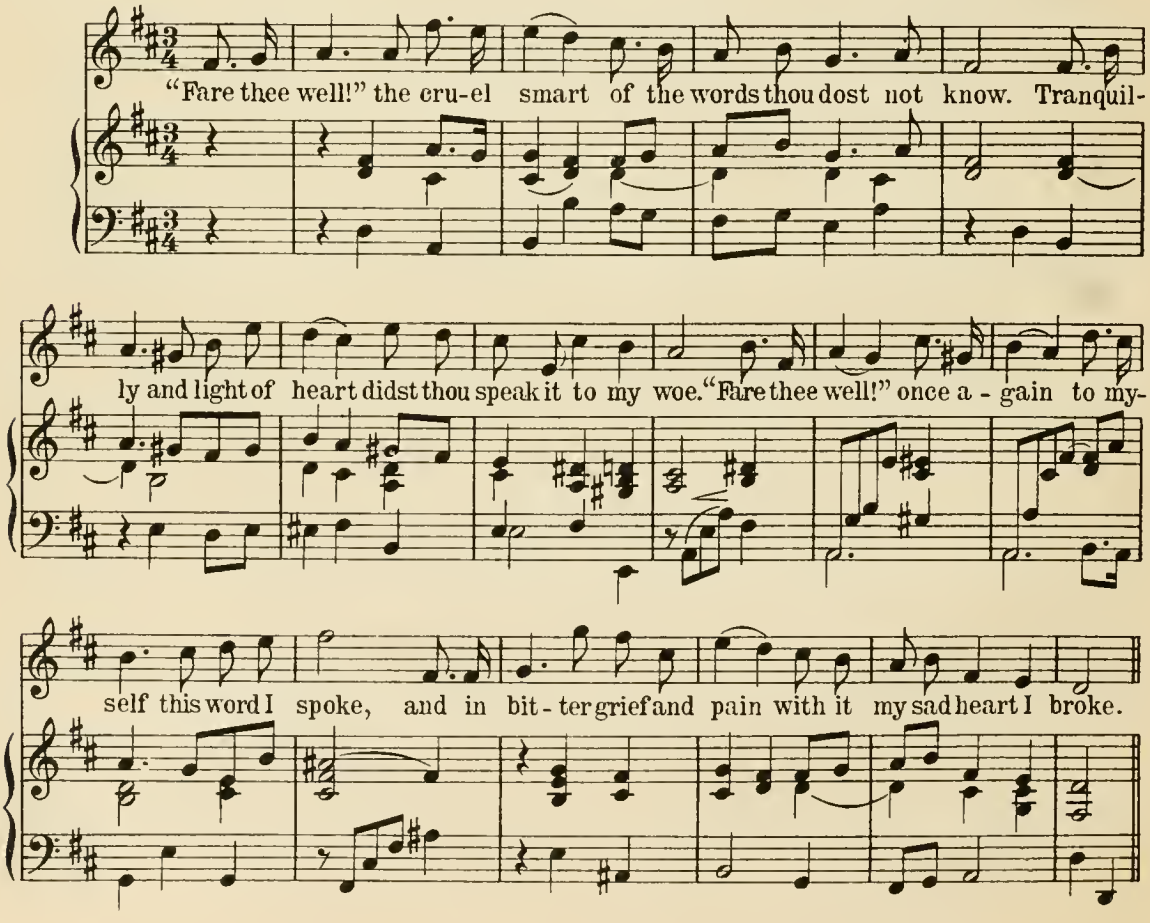
Long, I hope, before he has really mastered this subtle and important resource of his art the beginner will have impatiently attempted further experiments in music-making. It will have occured to him that a song must be an easy thing to compose: many amateurs even more ignorant than he contrive to write quite successful songs. Now I shall not waste space by giving examples of his crude efforts to imitate the shop-ballad. To reap success in this field demands total ignorance, or at least, disregard of all that is here meant by the word Composition. I would prefer to consider that our student, after a few attempts, will have sufficient taste to despise the conventionality and banality of this sort of thing. He will then seek for words to set which shall not be written *ad hoc* by professional rhymesters. He will most likely hit upon some little German lyric such as this:

## Fare-thee-well.

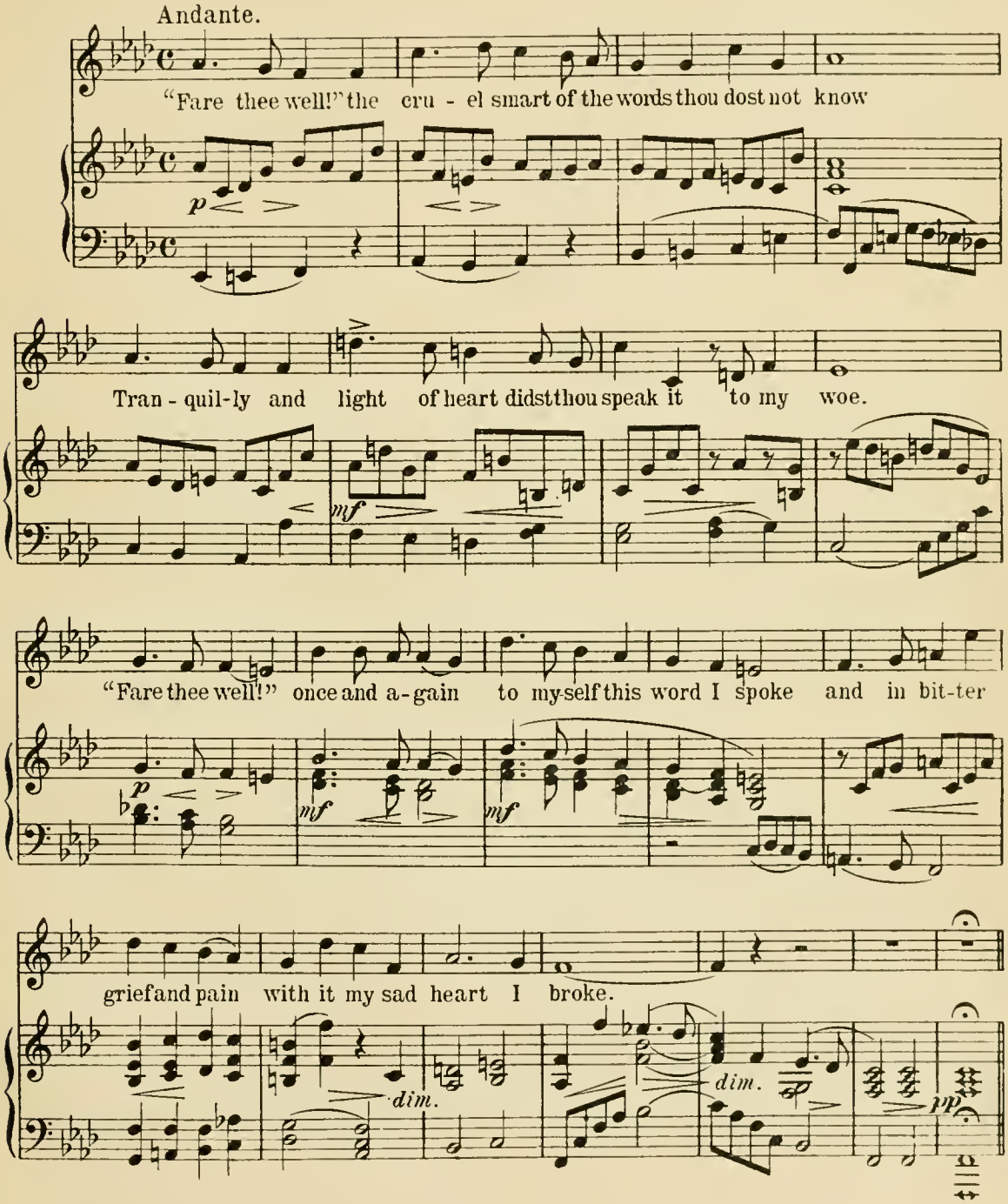
Fare-thee-well! The bitter smart
Of the word thou dost not know.
Tranquilly and light of heart
Didst thou speak it, to my woe.

Fare-thee-well! Once and again
To myself this word I spoke,
And in bitter grief and pain
With it my sad heart I broke.

His first attempt to set these words will probably proceed thus. Seeking for a phrase to fit the first line, he finds the melody with which we have credited him above to contain the requisite accents, so down it goes. Experience has by this time taught him the advisability of a change of key in the middle and — though he has but little knowledge of how to modulate — the melody probably works its way to the dominant and back, his harmony following suit, rather more clumsily than the following:


"Fare thee well!" the cru-el smart of the words thou dost not know. Tranquil-
ly and light of heart didst thou speak it to my woe. "Fare thee well!" once a - gain to my-
self this word I spoke, and in bit - ter grief and pain with it my sad heart I broke.

I have purposely made nothing crude about this imaginary attempt, which yet cannot give much satisfaction to the musician who has any poetry in his soul. The melody is pretty, but insipid, and does not convey the spirit of the words at all. Indeed the very accentuation — a matter of paramount importance — is not over-well attended to. The cadence at the end of the first line is bad and the setting of the word "tranquilly" with the accent on the last syllable is shocking. Perhaps the student presently makes another attempt and has the rare good sense to bethink him of trying a different time, and setting the words in a minor key to give more sadness.


Andante.
"Fare thee well!" the cru - el smart of the words thou dost not know
p
Tran - quil-ly and light of heart didst thou speak it to my woe.
mf
"Fare thee well!" once and a-gain to my-self this word I spoke and in bit-ter
p
mf
mf
grief and pain with it my sad heart I broke.
dim.
dim.
pp

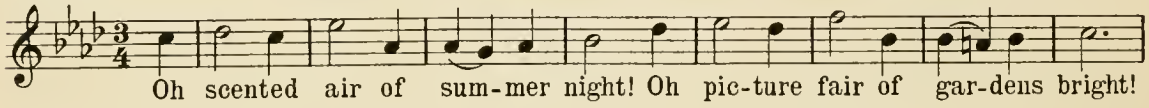
This is a slight improvement in character, but though the minor mode helps to convey the sad tone of the poem, it - together with the effort to preserve the proper elocution of the lines — has somehow caused the melody to become dull and uninteresting. It will be found that whatever merit this setting possesses is due as much to the marks of expression as anything; a fact which the student should lay to heart and ponder over.

But the chief objection to both these songs is their limited extent. Unless the critic be a fanatical devotee of Franz and Schumann he must feel that a song of 16 bars is hardly a song at all from the singer's point of view. The text has been so closely set that there is no time to do anything with it — no opportunity for effect. Is there any remedy for these defects, or are the words unsuitable for music?

The fault is only in the writer's inexperience, who *set music to the words* instead of *setting the words to music.* The remedy is, firstly, to spread the words over a greater number of bars; secondly, to allow the voice to pause in suitable places; and thirdly, to occasionally repeat a line or part of a line where this will emphasize and not weaken the sense. Of the first device here is a good example:

"Oh scented air
Of summer night!
Oh picture fair
Of gardens bright!
The heart of the reveller filling with rare Delight."

If these lines were to be set by a 'prentice hand the result would be of the following character:



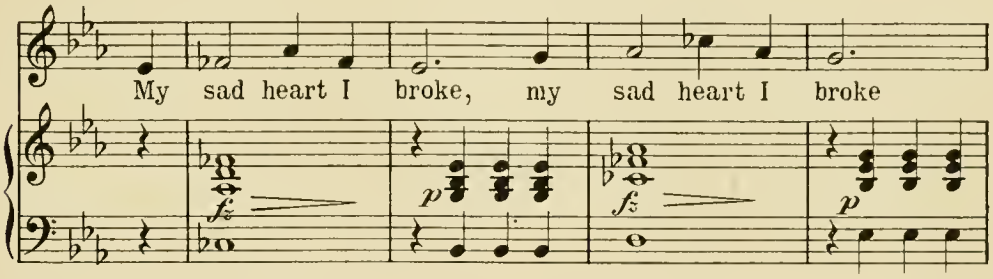

- but when an artist in rhythm like the late Arthur Goring Thomas takes them in hand the result is:

Oh, scent - ed air of sum - mer night! Oh!
p
picture fair of gar-dens bright! the heart of the re - - -
dim.
veller fil-ling with rare de-light, with rare de - light.
p

It will be observed that this setting has *rhythmical invention* as well as melodic invention; whereas to merely hang the text upon minims and crotchets like so many clothes-pegs is feeble and poverty-stricken. The other remedies mentioned need hardly be exemplified.

Now observe how differently the musician of experience would approach the task of setting this "Farewell" song. First of all he would read his text through and carefully estimate its character, which is one of bitter despair. In the first line is a kind of burden or refrain, the colour of which must pervade the whole song. The sadness must be nursed and made to rise to an anguished climax in the last line (which is where the point of a poem usually resides). This "My sad heart I broke" can be repeated and mournfully dwelt on, if necessary. The first task is therefore to find a striking cadence for the concluding words, and one which can be repeated without loss of power. This is where a proper knowledge of Harmony comes in. The most gloomy pair of chords, to my thinking, is the last inversion of the "German Sixth" and its resolution. Something like the following seems to be demanded:

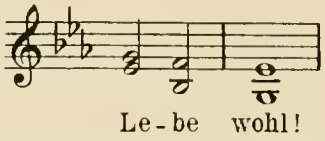
Experience suggests that this effect can be heightened by doing the same thing in a less powerful way first: this is better than a simple repetition.



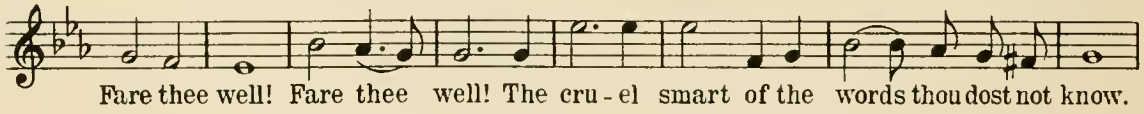

And now a third phrase must be found – twice as large, so as to balance the other two, and still more poignant. This demands deliberate invention, even at the risk of extravagance, which is always excusable in a dramatic climax.

The chief effect of the song having been sketched out the composer can next turn his thoughts to the opening. And this should be your invariable procedure in the composition of anything, whether play, poem, symphony song or anything else that can be composed: *get the end first.* The general scope and character of the work being decided upon it is in the ending that the character is most clearly manifested – it is in the climax that the whole effect is made. The end may suggest a beginning; a beginning will never suggest an end, except to the very experienced mind.

The opening of our song is the point where individual fancy would most display itself, so in order that this lesson may not become an exhibition of mere personal skill I will take as the initial phrase (the choice is of less importance than might be imagined) Beethoven's

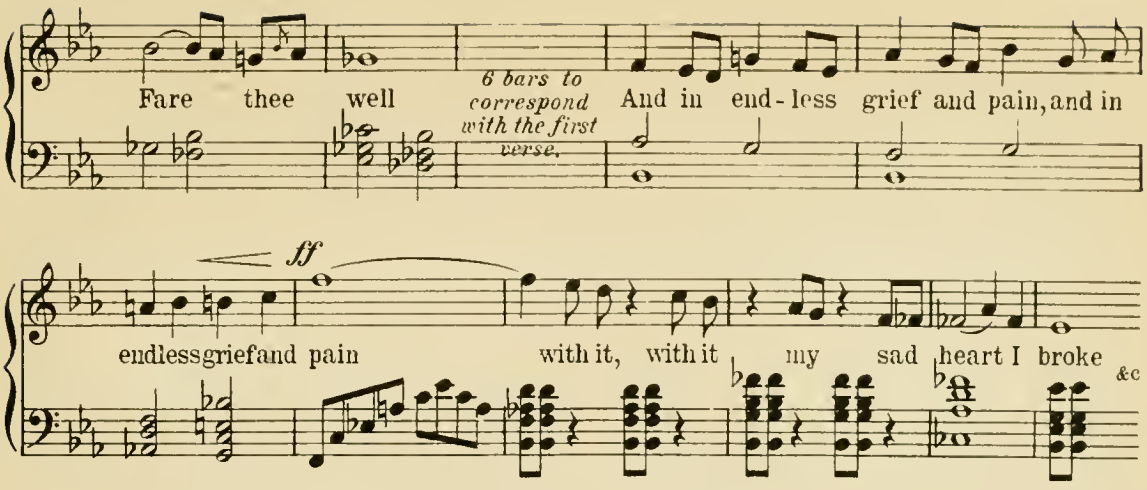



By repeating this we shall have a four-bar period to balance the indivisible and awkward 1½ lines that follow:




Part of this can be echoed by the piano (in order to spread it out) with a modulation to the dominant, if desired. But here we must stop to consider another point. For what voice are we writing? If we had set out with the intention of writing a Soprano or Tenor song it would be necessary to transpose what we have done into F or G flat and start again. Only too many composers, oblivious of these practical considerations, go thoughtlessly ahead and find, too late, that their song lies badly for any kind of voice, so that no one will care to sing it. Our ending has committed us to a high E flat, so we will decide to write it for Baritone and must henceforth take care to avoid everything unsuitable to that class of voice. The division of our song into two verses of parallel scope is forced upon us by the text: it now behoves us to make such a mournful cadence to the first of these as shall not anticipate the effect of our conclusion.

Here, then is a rough sketch of how we propose to achieve all this:


Fare thee well
6 bars to correspond with the first verse.
And in end-less grief and pain, and in
ff
endless grief and pain
with it, with it my sad heart I broke
&c

In the second verse, at the repetition of the words "And in endless grief and pain" accented passing-notes convey the sentiment, and the section before the cadence is artfully filled in with a sort of sobbing repetition of our only remaining words.

The song being now *constructed,* it remains to break up the harmonic scaffolding and add the artistic touches which shall convert it into a thing of beauty. Not till now is it necessary to think about what form the pianoforte accompaniment shall take. Matters of detail should be left till the last, and the young composer only too often confuses himself and weakens his results by attending to them at too early a stage.

The chief use of a florid accompaniment in a song is either, by means of interesting figures, to impart animation to a melody in long notes, or else, by means of plain arpeggios, to make up for the lack of sustaining power in the piano. The mournful character of this song forbids the first of these courses: little more than supporting harmony is required. We therefore break this up into quaver movement, taking advantage of every point where the melody itself has some short notes to relapse into plain chords, thus avoiding monotony. An accompaniment that goes along in one unvaried figure quickly loses interest, however beautiful in the first instance. Observe that in bar 15 I refrained from modulating, finding the A flat sound more melancholy than the A natural:* also the return to the key was so immediate as to make a modulation superfluous. The change to the key of C flat in verse 2 allows of some good sombre harmonies and the sobbing rhythm in bars 40 and 41 fills up the empty bars of the last cadences very suitably. It will be noticed that the augmented 6th chords resolve each time upon a lower inversion than the expected one. This is done to remove any feeling of finality about them and thus enhance the conclusive effect of the strange ending.

The ultimate result, apart from the intrinsic musical interest, is, I consider, a song of some dignity and pathos.

---

* The Supertonic chromatic 7th is the first foreign chord the young composer learns, and I implore him to use it with moderation.

# Fare-thee-well!

30
well! Oft and a-gain to my - self this word I
f
spoke
agitato
and in end-less
p
cresc.
cresc.
grief and pain, and in endless grief and pain
40
with it, with it my sad
allarg.
mf cresc.
ff
dim.
dim.
heart I broke, my sad heart I broke,
>ten.
pp
mf >ten.
pp
50
my sad heart I broke.
mf
p smorzando
pp

All the modifications made during the composition of this song were made, it should be observed, with definite purpose. If you merely alter because it "seems nicer" another way you only encourage the bad habits of vagueness and indecision. Most *experienced* composers indeed, instead of constructing this song as laboriously as we have here done, would have written it straight off without much *conscious* consideration, and would probably be unable to explain *why* they had done it thus rather than any other way. They would say the whole thing "came to them" so.

But it would not and could not "come" so to the inexperienced hand. It is just as when a great pianist sits and plays at sight a new easy piece; without thought of fingering, notes, or phrasing, he gives a finished interpretation, which the unpractised player would require weeks of practice to emulate. So marvellous is the difference between the working of the human mind in familiar and unfamiliar ground. The *learner* must have a conscious "why" and "because" for the placing of every note and expression mark, or he will achieve no results worth mentioning.

It may be objected that we have here an entirely different kind of song to that attempted in the two first settings. That is so; but, as we found, the words would not lend themselves to ballad methods; they were too short. And it is not my purpose to waste time and space by considering this rudimentary type of music at all. As I have said, the song of plain 8-bar periods, however beautiful it may be in the hands of Schumann or Grieg, is scarcely *Composition*.

That the vast majority of human beings is incapable of apprehending this last sentence is to be deplored, but it cannot be helped. I am here writing for those who have some—however little—predeliction towards Art, and Art I take to be the construction of something beautiful by the use of brain-power. The Ballad, Hymn-tune and Chant are merely embryonic music—the foundation stones from which an artistic structure may rise, but of no art-value in themselves.

Let us, however, write another song of a more lyric character, which shall attack the difficulty presented by irregular versification. Here are some charming lines from an old magazine.

## Home.

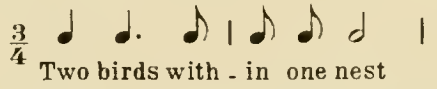
Two birds within one nest,
Two hearts within one breast,
Two souls within one fair
Firm league of love and pray'r,
Together bound for aye, together blest.

An ear that waits to catch
A hand upon the latch,
A step that hastens its sweet rest to win;
A world of care without,
A world of strife shut out,
A world of love shut in.

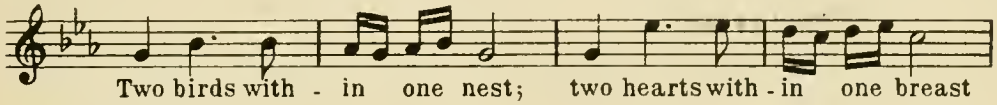
The similarity of the lines is very alluring to the young composer, but the third line of each verse seems at first to present insuperable difficulties. The beginner, with whom rhythm is necessarily a weak point, is apt to think that any deviation from regular 8- and 6- syllable verse renders symmetrical melody impossible. I have occasionally derided this idea by setting a newspaper advertisement to a pretty waltz tune, but indeed, any oratorio air, such as "If with all your hearts" or "O rest in the Lord" proves that not only is regular verse unnecessary to a good tune but that melody is far more distinctive (i.e. rhythmically varied) without this adjunct than with it.

The character of this poem is one of serene happiness, exultant at the close, and as before, we must establish the climax of verse 2 first. In this case a conventional cadence seems suitable.

This phrase indicating a Soprano song we note the fact and next search for a good setting of the opening line. After some unsuccessful trials in various times we decide that the proper accent can best be given thus:

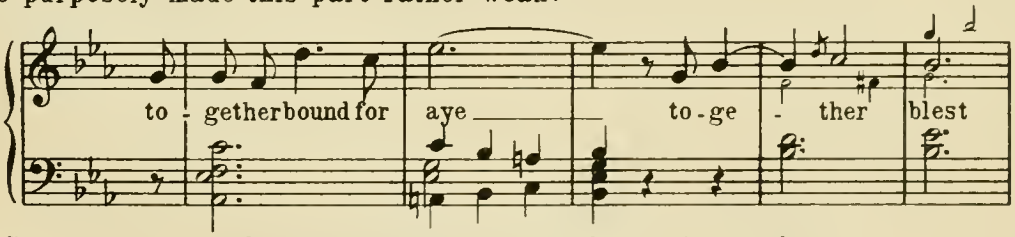



This is an excellent, because uncommon, rhythmical pattern. Clothed with melody it might become –

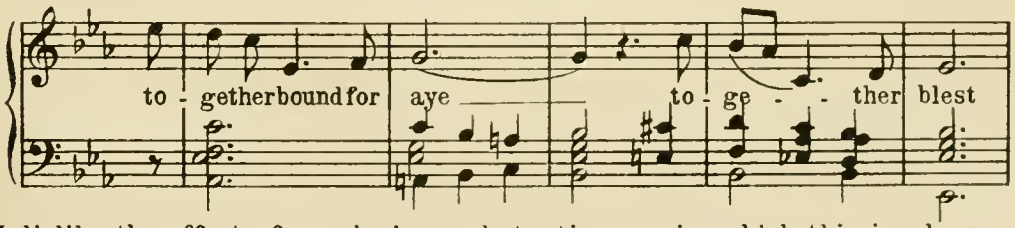



The sequence between the first and third bars gains by not being too exact. The next lines are very troublesome to set without spoiling our melody. Fortunately they can be persuaded to fit a four - bar phrase with an inverted cadence:

and the last line must be spread out to fill the four bars of the real conclusion. I have purposely made this part rather weak:




Some people would prefer stronger melody here: thus perhaps –

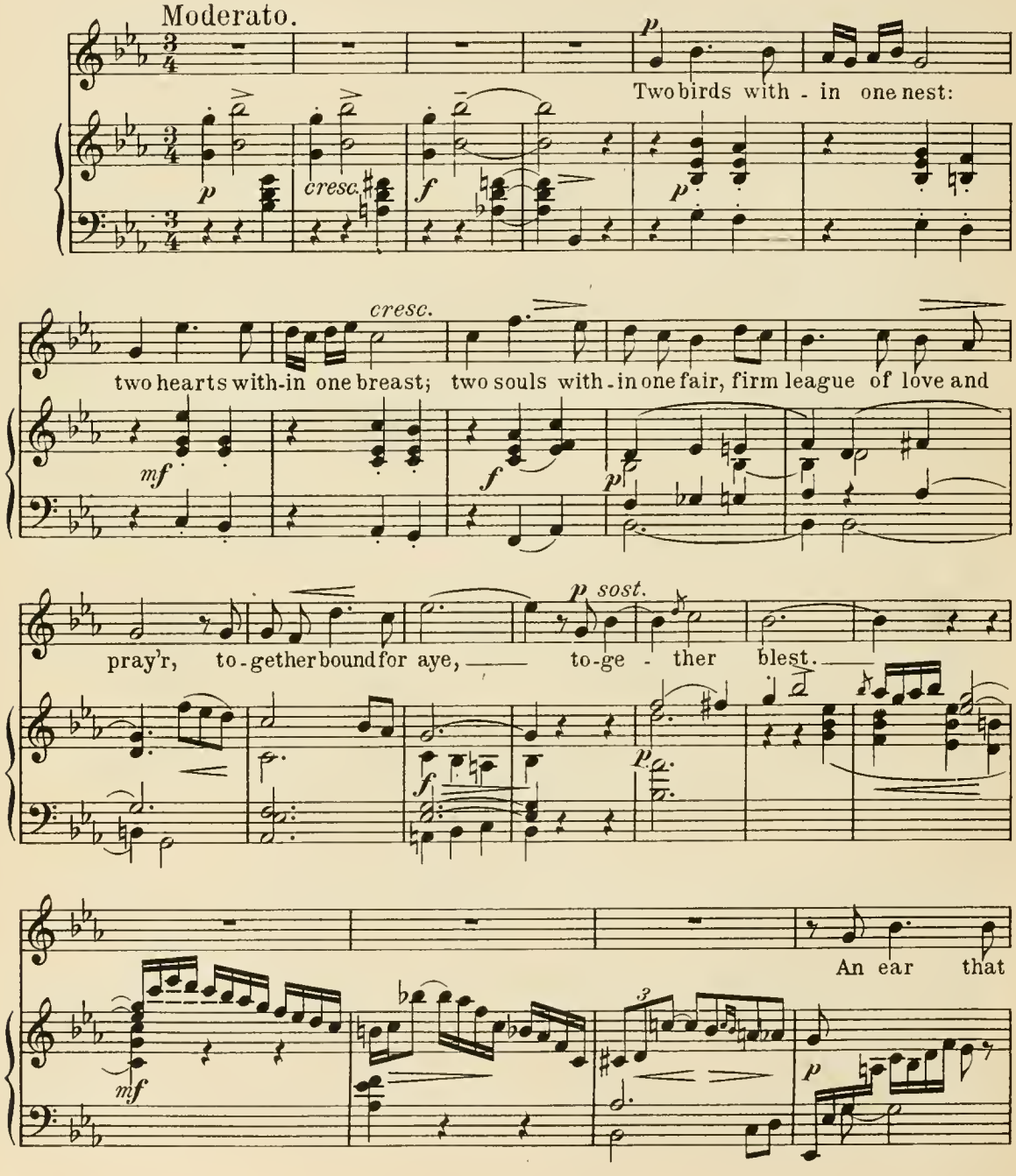



but I dislike the effect of conclusion and starting again which this involves, as the sense really runs on into the next verse. Here you see the difference between the ballad and the *composed* song: the art of composition is the art of making music *as continuous as you require.*

The second verse, it is easy to perceive, will demand a more florid accompaniment: repeated chords form the simplest means of working up the excitement as we approach the climax; therefore we will commence with arpeggios. The interlude between the verses must have semiquavers in order to set this going and therefore the introductory bars, which should always be left till the last — a thing the amateur would never think of — had better simply draw attention to the principal feature of the rhythm.

The completed song is simple enough: observe that the melody at the commencement of verse 2 is not injured by the slight modifications enjoined by the text.

## Home.


Moderato.
Two birds with - in one nest:
cresc.
two hearts with-in one breast; two souls with - in one fair, firm league of love and
pray'r, to - gether bound for aye, to - ge - ther blest.
An ear that

waits to catch a hand up - on the latch, a step that
cresc.
p
string.
Tempo I.
hastens, ah! that hastens its sweet rest to win; a
string.
cresc.
f
rit.
world of care with-out; a world of strife shut out; a
p
p
world of strife and care shut out a world of love shut
ff rit.
cresc.
f
ff
in.
f

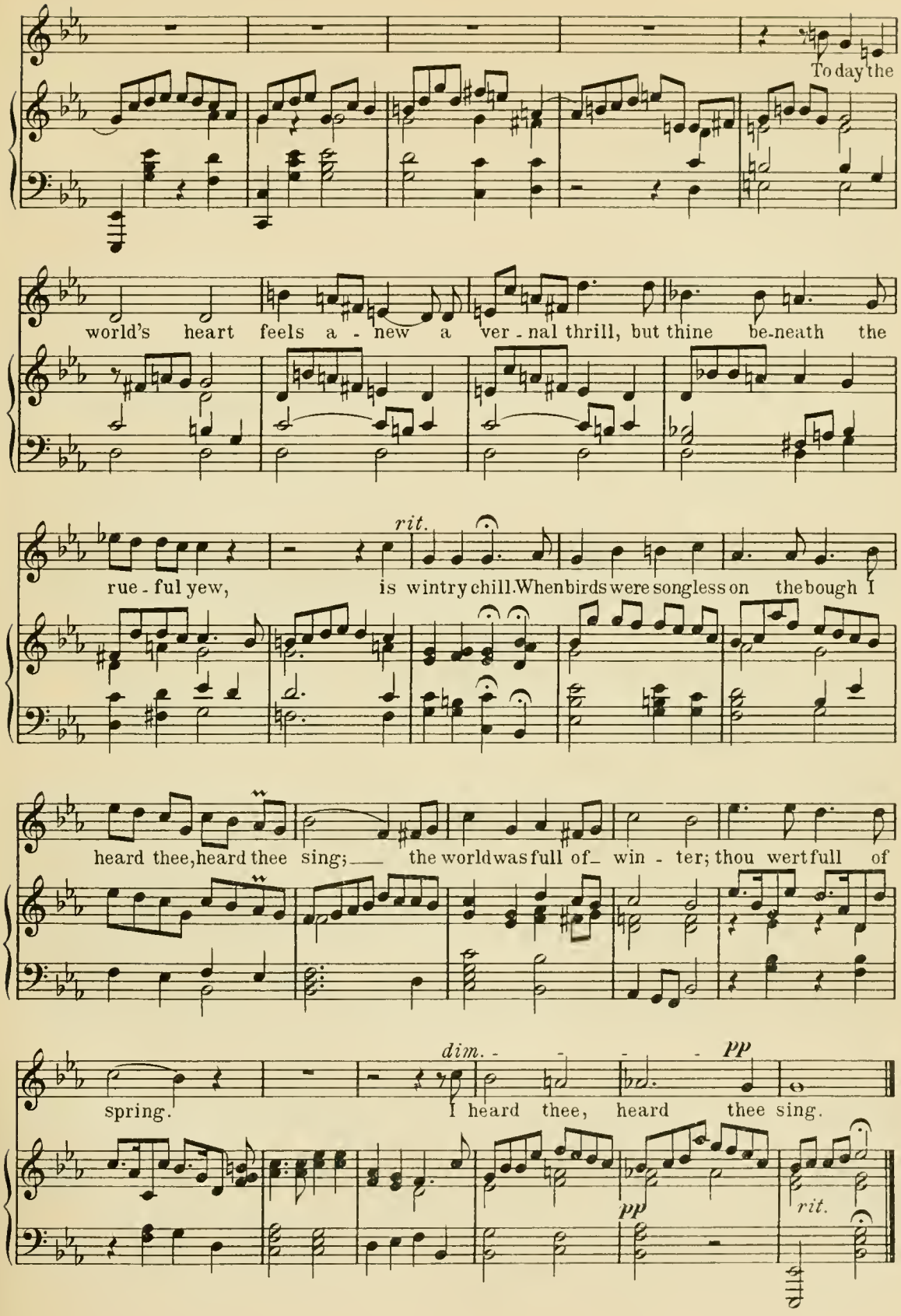
Next, in order to shew how much depends upon technique and how little upon impulse, or "inspiration" as the amateurs call it, I will give, as a striking example, a song written by a young lady and afterwards improved by her teacher. Taking the following rather pretty verses,

When birds were songless on the bough
I heard thee sing;
The world was full of winter:
Thou wert full of spring.

Today the world's heart feels anew
A vernal thrill;
But thine, beneath the rueful yew,
Is wintry chill.

—the composer proceeded with the usual lack of method, although with every desire to write a good song. The result I here reproduce. The bad harmony, the groping modulations, the uncouth counterpoint in the last verse, and the feeble ending—all these things that will strike the more educated reader as ludicrous and unmusical, are really only evidences of inexperience and lack of skill: a few months of thorough study would improve all these points. But to ignore the sentiment of the song—to simply repeat the first stanza when the poem was found too short, thus destroying the whole point—this is a proof of total absence of feeling and imagination.

Andante.
When birds were songless
on the bough I heard thee, heard thee sing. The world was full of
rit.
tempo
win - ter; thou wert full of Spring Thou wert full of Spring.
rit.
tempo


To day the
world's heart feels a - new a ver - nal thrill, but thine be-neath the
rue - ful yew,
rit.
is wintry chill. When birds were songless on the bough I
heard thee, heard thee sing; the world was full of win - ter; thou wert full of
spring.
dim.
pp
I heard thee, heard thee sing.
pp
rit.

The only criticism I could offer on this attempt was to say that it reminded me of Berlioz when not at his best. The composer took this as praise.

Let the student now ask himself in what way these lines should have been set in order to illustrate their sentiment—to dwell, not upon the fact that "I heard thee sing" but that the singer is dead and "wintry chill." Here is a version which will perhaps remind the reader of those "restored" pictures one sees in the shop windows. Observe that the necessary return to the subject is here given over to the piano while the voice mournfully reiterates the only line (the 4th) that is possible. Notice also the change from gay to grave in verse 2 and the use made of the accompaniment figure in bar 20.

world's heart feels a - new a ver - nal thrill
mf
cantabile
it feels a-new a ver - nal thrill; but thine
3
cresc.
f
dim.
ah! thine beneath the rueful yew is win - try chill,
f
dim.
rall.
win - try chill.
Thou that wert full of spring,
p
pp
pp rit. ad lib.
Thou that wert full of spring,
ppp sospirando
Ah!
p
u.c.
pp
ppp

This now becomes, I think, a very pretty and pathetic little song. But again I must point out that the entire merit lies in the workmanship. And the first version, wretched as it is, compares quite favourably with some amateur efforts which the poor professional musician has to vamp up in order that the composer may be extolled and the publisher grow rich!

It has always been my favourite plan to teach what to do by showing pupils what to avoid: let us therefore next give a specimen of

## HOW *not* TO WRITE A SONG.

Here is a typical set of verses; washy and indefinite as to their meaning, such as German song-writers of the inferior kind love. I have translated them pretty closely, into words perhaps a trifle less trite than the originals.

### Winter wanderings

O how far, far away
Snow-crested mountains I survey!
Clouds gather round ye in sombre masses,
Hiding your boulders and yawning crevasses.
Deep in the snow my footsteps grope
And my heart loses every hope.

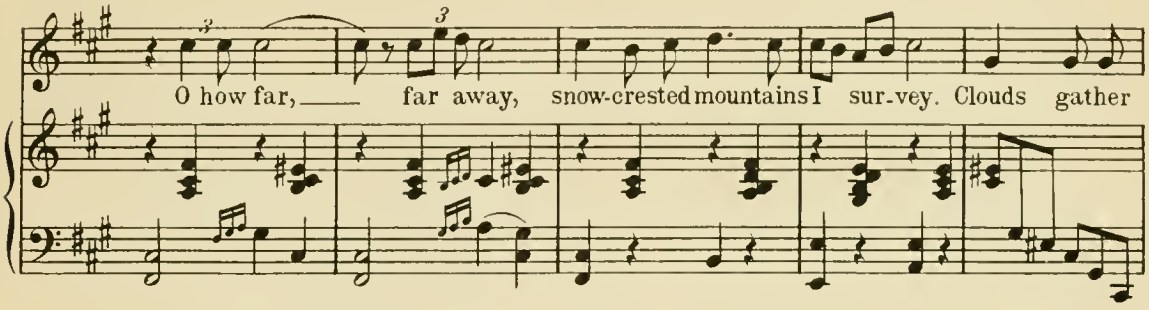
O how far, far away
Lies the hope of a sunnier day!
Where verdant valleys and plains allure me,
Flowers in bowers that seek to immure me.
Yonder to bask in the daisied mead
O it were rapture and bliss indeed!

O how far, far away
All but my grief and dark dismay!
If I conquer yon height, the nearest,
May I hope to regain my dearest?
But no answer the forest hath
And the snow has obscured my path.

O how far, far away
Heart, dost thou thro' the tempest stray!
Face the gloom and the sky will lighten;
Brave the winter, spring will brighten.
Thou shalt attain the highest and best,
Peace and affection and heavenly rest!

If the student cannot feel how unsuitable these words are for music his prospects of becoming a good composer are, I fear, small. It is of course true that music has often been put to worse stuff than this and even with brilliant results, but I am trying to teach you not to imitate, but to avoid the sins of better men than yourself. The last

stanza has the saving merit of affording opportunity for some kind of climax (with its Longfellow-like moral), but otherwise there is nothing which music can lay hold of. The composer (a foreigner who, I trust, is unlikely to suffer under these strictures) has approached his task in the worst way. Having discovered (at the keyboard) a little figure of accompaniment, he has made four bars of introduction on it and then started thus:




continuing in the same style with two chords in every single bar and these two forms of accompaniment alternating every four bars all through verses 1, 2, and 3. It would have occurred to some people that a change of character was desirable in verse 2, but no! This is a simple song and must keep to ballad methods. The melody is a mere sequence of notes adapted to the harmony.

The last verse must at least get into the major, but with odd perversity the composer contrives that ten of its twelve bars shall cling round E and B flat minor, thus avoiding all feeling of brightening up till the last. A small sample will suffice:

The melody (!) keeps rigidly to its one rhythm, the harmony changes regularly at every half-bar and the whole song, without committing the slightest grammatical fault, is as perfunctory as a polka and as colourless as a hymn-tune. The fact that the composer has not even the excuse of ignorance only makes his performance the more deplorable. I could make a machine — I have often threatened to do so — that would compose just as well as this.

Innumerable so-called Artistic Songs are written, even by experienced hands, which seem like pianoforte pieces with uninteresting vocal parts added. This kind of thing may have highly poetic intentions but it is certainly very poor craftsmanship. It is only possible to give the main interest to the accompaniment when this is orchestral; when voice and piano are pitted against each other the voice *must* be paramount. Some of Schumann's unsuccessful experiments, such as *"Das war ein Flöten und Geigen"* or *"Die alten bösen Lieder"* should have shewn how impossible it is to make the voice accompany the piano, yet even experienced composers make the hopeless attempt continually.

# Chapter II.

## THE SHORT PIANOFORTE PIECE.

When we dispense with words and attempt abstract musical invention we are like an artist without a model. We then have to rely upon one of two things in our mind: either our knowledge of construction, gathered from a close study of our predecessors' works, or our knowledge of character in music, gathered from a knowledge of national folk-songs and dances. Obviously, we should be twice as well off if we had both of these resources at command.

Short pieces may be roughly divided into two classes, the lyric and the continuous: we will consider the former — the simpler — first.

Such music is generally on the lines of a simple vocal piece — a harmonised complete melody in what is called "simple two-part form," the first part usually ending away from the tonic key, the second returning thereto. The Mendelssohn Song without Words was an artistic attempt to invest this with a certain amount of continuity and instrumental display, but modern taste has recoiled from this, preferring the simpler type which Grieg and Schumann have so ably exploited, in which there is — as I have said of the Ballad — practically no composition at all.

This kind of piece depends for success upon the charm of its melody and the novelty of its harmony — both matters demanding special study.

The only demand made upon the *composer's* resources is at the end of the first strain of the melody; here a fresh effort of the invention is imperative. If the student will read the 3rd book of Grieg's *Lyric Pieces* — perhaps his very best work — the numbers will be seen to be of identical structure, consisting of a first idea of about 8 bars modulating to the dominant; then (with one exception) follows a second idea, *introducing a fresh rhythmical feature* and then a return to the first. The Exception is in No. 4, *"The Little Bird,"* where, in order to preserve the chirruping character, the second part continues with the same figure as the first. In so tiny a piece this is no fault, but observe how much less interesting, consequently, it is than the others.

If the reader will next turn to almost any of Schumann's smaller pieces -say the *Arabesque* or either of the *Novelletten,* — he will find that the second strain of each idea is almost always a mere melodic sequence on the first, the interest being sustained by modulation (often of great beauty) and he will, I hope, perceive how much more satisfactory it is to spur the invention to a fresh effort than to rely on mere ingenuity.

For though Schumann's procedûre was at first productive of charming results, it is a device only too easy to acquire: given a two—or four—bar phrase, any experienced musician can knock you up a symmetrical piece, *secundem artem.* If you will look into Novello's Primer of Organ Extemporisation you will see that the course I deprecate is just that advocated for the improvisation of Preludes. But please remember that *Improvisation is not Composition,* and it is just that facile method of jerrybuilding essential to the former which is fatal to the latter. It may impose upon the ignorant listener, but the earnest musician will despise it. It is obvious, it is trite, it is brainless.

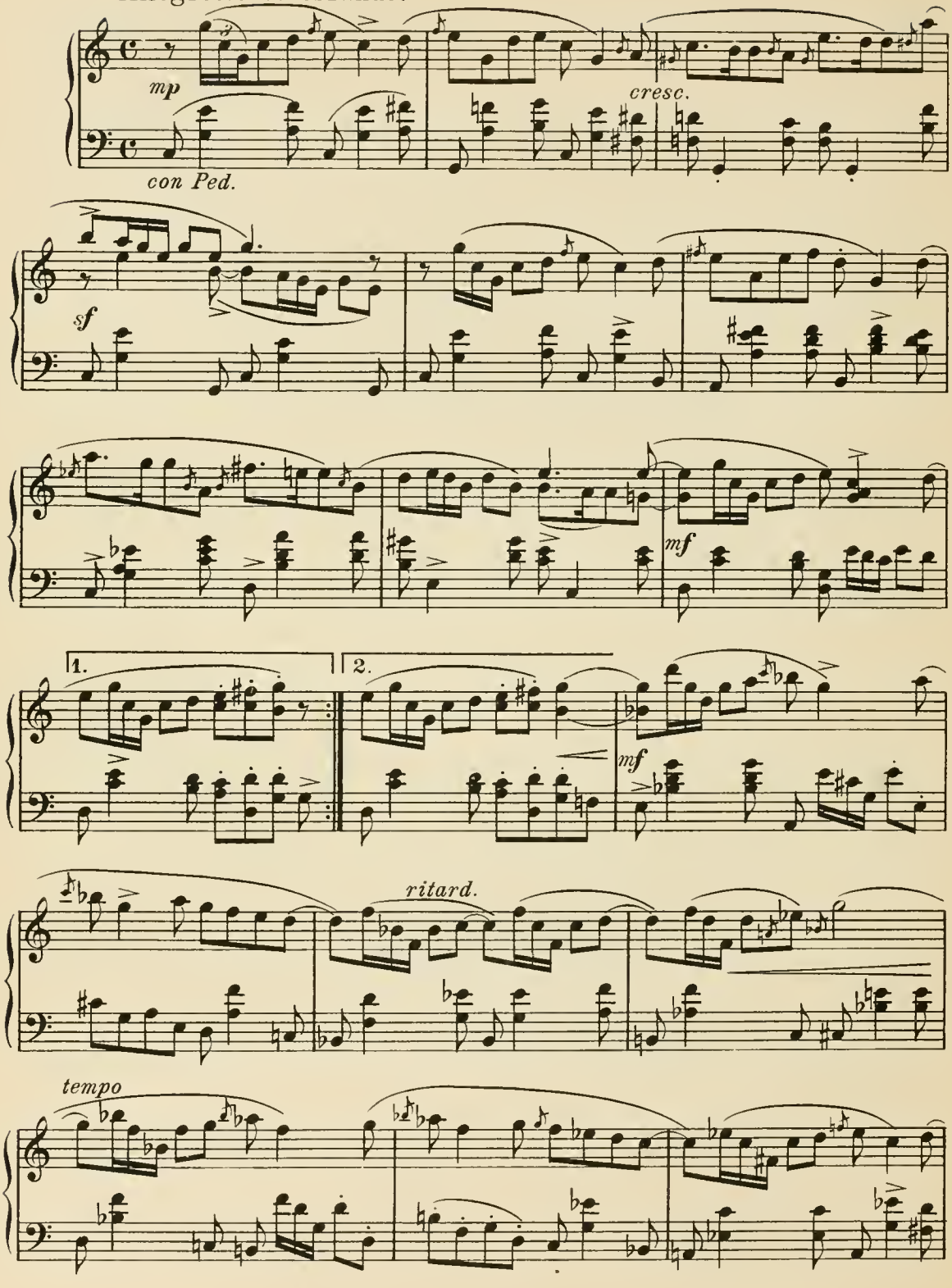
When the unintelligent composer has evolved a strain of melody—or it may be half a strain—and is at a loss for a continuation, he generally plays it over on the piano, or if his ear is sufficiently educated he mentally sings it over and over in the hope that the desired sequel will *come* of itself. Is this not a rather feminine, not to say feeble method of proceeding? If it succeeds there must be a cause for that success- there must be something which makes the discovered completion of the idea indubitably the proper one. Would it not be better to let cause precede effect – to apply a little reason to the matter and discover what that *something* is? To my mind it is humiliating to think that anything I do is the result of chance or luck. I want to turn to a completed work and say *truthfully* "There, good people, is my Minerva – the child of my brain." Not to be able to do so is surely to put oneself on a level with those amateurs who get all the brain-work supplied by someone else.

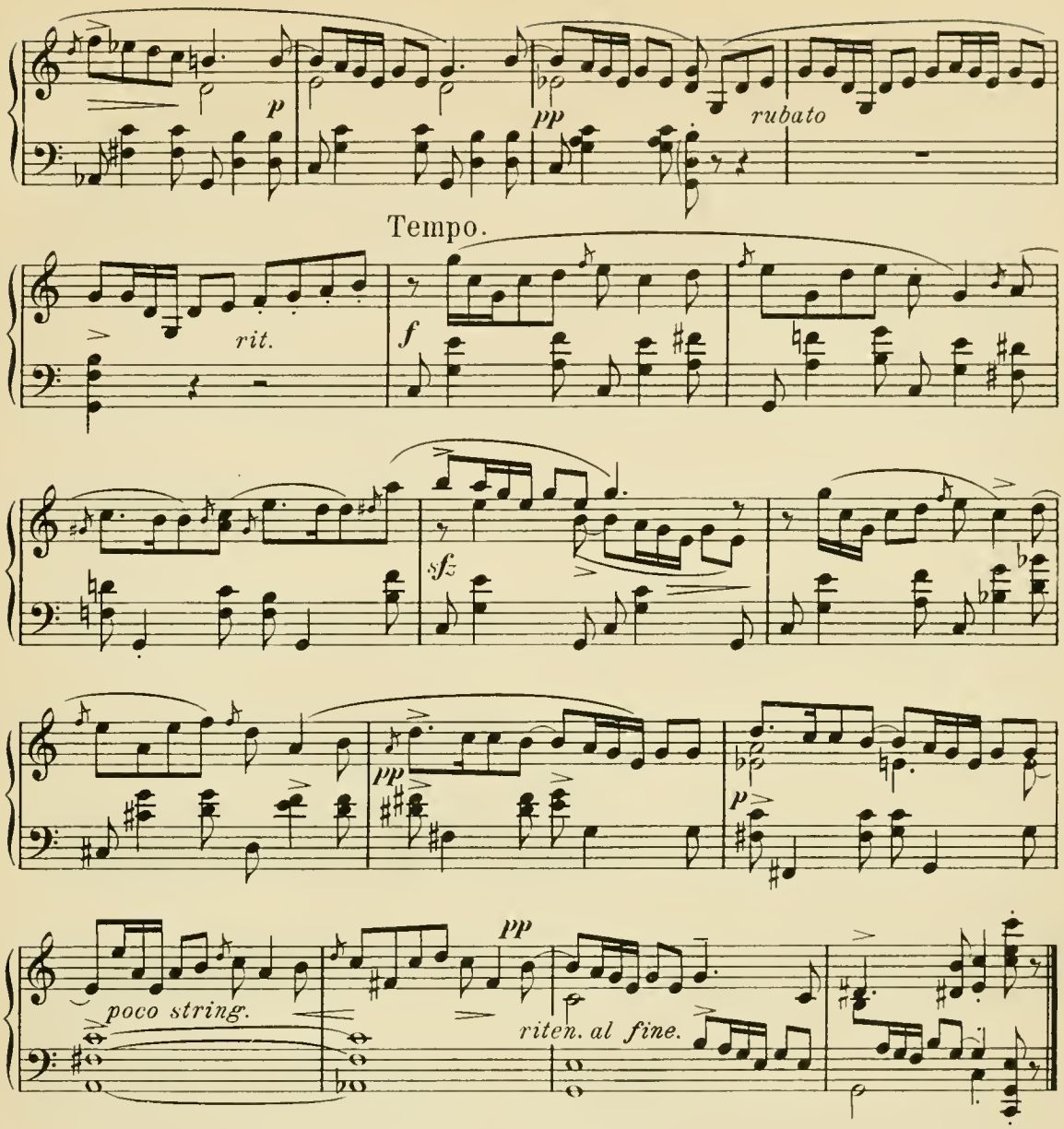
It would be by no means impossible – though certainly rather tedious– to enunciate here the general laws governing this matter of the logical continuation of an idea. I prefer to urge the young composer to simply use his brains and to help himself by the following necessary inquiry: "What have I, so far, done? What *must* the continuation do? Particularly, what must it *not* do?" The answers to these queries will always—at all stages of a work, whether great or small, be found most helpful.

One actual example is worth pages of general remarks. Let us take a typical short piece (its composer is lately dead and already forgotten) which contains most of the faults of its class, and let us try to improve it. I beg the reader to first play this piece on the piano once or twice and to criticize it himself before proceeding.

# Album Leaf.

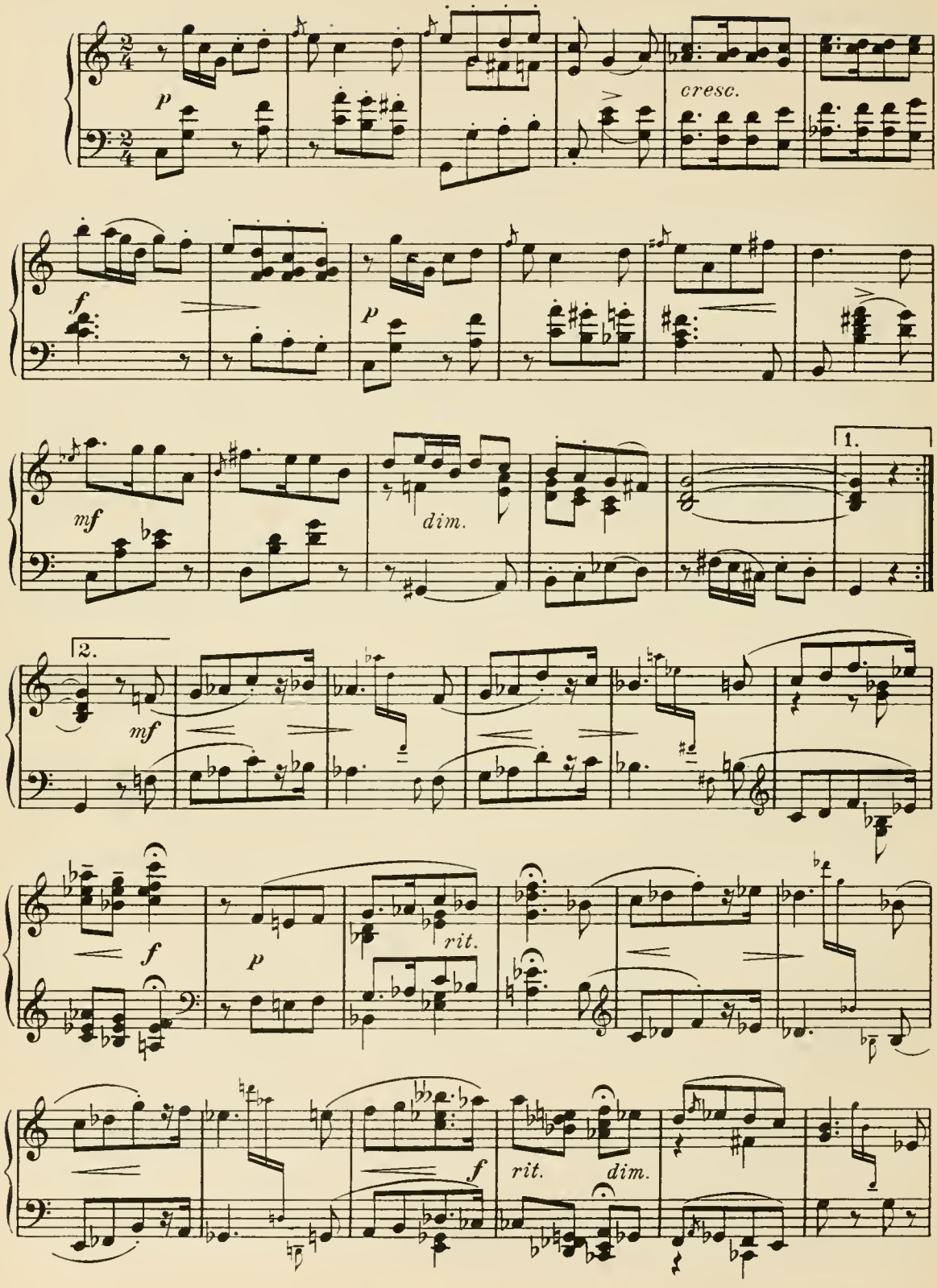
Allegretto scherzando.

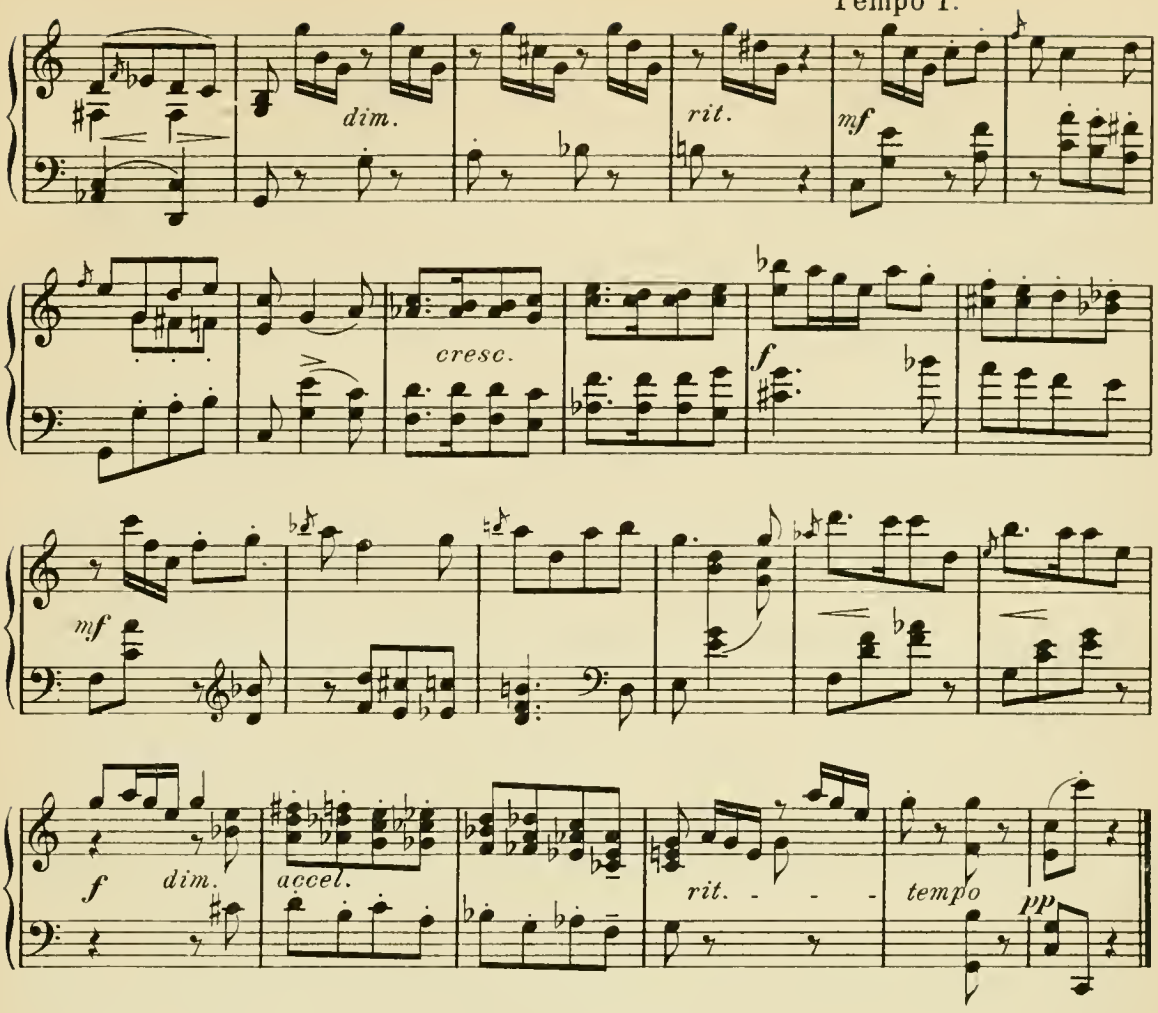





The most obvious fault of this piece is its monotony: the rhythmical motive in the first bar appears 37 times in 45 bars and the syncopated accompaniment — the tritest and most characterless of devices — scarcely ceases throughout. Then the modulations are all on the sub-dominant side; indeed they hang round B flat and follow no definite course: the return to the subject might be neater and the conclusion is no more final than that of the first part. These are the chief technical weaknesses, but the artistic faults are much graver; the playful character of the opening motive is not maintained, but dulled by the heavy accompaniment, and there is absolutely no fresh feature of interest after the commencement. The perfect cadence in the second bar gives a feeling of poverty and triviality which nothing can remove, yet with some modifications and a new second subject for the middle part it could be considerably improved. We will note it in $\frac{2}{4}$ instead of $\frac{4}{4}$ and remove the meaningless slur lines which destroy what little life the piece has.

# Scherzetto.






Again waiving the intrinsic merit of the subjects – for, be it remembered, we are only regarding the actual *composition of the music* – it will not, I think, be disputed that the piece has now acquired a more definite character and intention. By breaking up the accompaniment, converting the harmony as well as the melody into more varied rhythmical patterns, a feeling of lightness and fancy is conveyed, justifying us in re-naming it "Scherzo" instead of the colourless title "Album-leaf." In such a piece some trifle of unexpectedness and abruptness in the conclusion is essential. The graver second subject, to be in proportion, only consists of sequential repetitions of one small phrase. I preserved the original imitation at bar 9 at first, transferring it to the bass, but finding it heavy and uncouth I removed it, with much else, for the sake of lightness.

If then the young composer *must* write a short piece I would bid him remember that even such great men as Beethoven and Brahms have written some which no one cares to play, the reason being that they are of no definite character. It is of no use to label a pointless piece with a fanciful name: that trick is played out. But ask yourself why Chopin, in his most modest efforts, has never once missed the mark. Or why has Tschaikowsky succeeded so often in this line while Scriabine and Glasounow, with all their brilliant talents, have failed so often? Much may be learnt on this head from the hundreds of lovely miniatures penned by Zdenko Fibich* – far less known than they deserve to be. They are unpianistic and often too short for effect, but teeming with poetry and ingenious invention.

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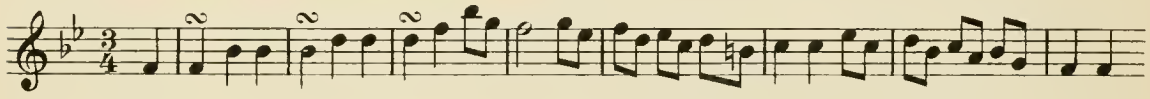
* *Stimmungen, Eindrücke und Erinnerungen* (Fancies, Impressions & Memories) by Z. Fibich. Op. 41 – 4 books; Op. 44 – 4 books: Op. 47 – 10 books; Op. 57 – 3 books. Urbánek & Co. Prague.

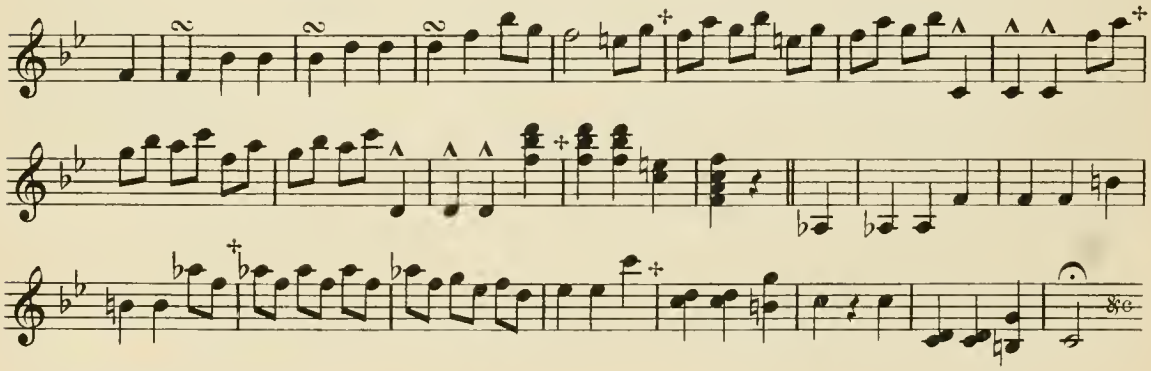
# Chapter III.

## EXTENSION OF MELODY.

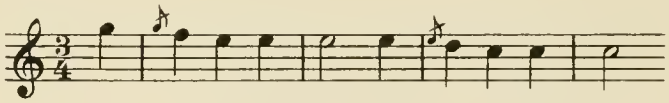
Music in lyric or dance form always presents a certain rigidity of outline, which we may term "eight-bar-ishness," an inherent weakness which Schumann, Grieg and their many imitators have seldom made the slightest attempt to overcome. Yet until the composer has learnt how to overcome it at will it is useless for him to attempt to write continuous music. The reason why the amateur cannot write a satisfactory large work is because he has only learnt to recognise phrases of two and four bars: the art of going for any required length without a perfect cadence is unknown to him. Amongst the great composers incomparably the cleverest at dealing with this particular difficulty was Joseph Haydn. It is a great pity that modern taste is so out of sympathy with his music, for it supplies endless examples for the student, which he ignores because the matter and manner are so unattractive to him. I have tried in vain to get students to write Minuets; they are as nonplussed as if one asked them to write a Bamboula. Yet it is just in the Minuet that Haydn's mastery over the technique of rhythm is so strikingly exhibited. For instance, given these eight bars:



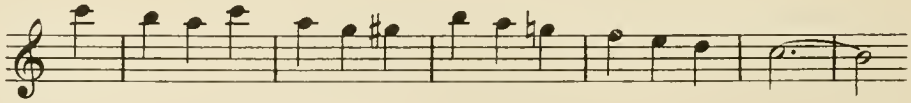
it would have occurred to few other people to answer them by ten bars made up of phrases of 4, 3, 3 and 2 bars; still less to continue in the same vein with 3, 3, 2 and 2 thus:



or, given these four bars

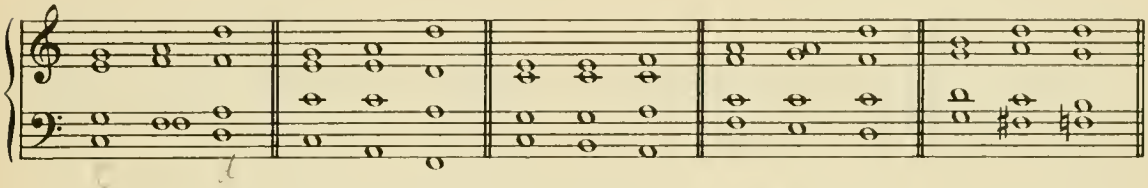


certainly only he would have thought of answering them first by six,



and afterwards just as convincingly, by eight:

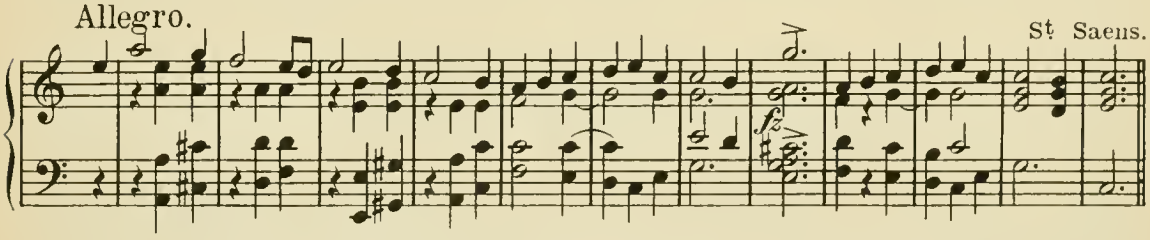
Now to do this sort of thing naturally and adroitly is only in the power of one who has studied the structure of melody and cultivated a sense of shape. I have not found the most carefully written text-books on this subject to be of much practical service to the student; if he will try to write a comic opera and do his best to evade the constant succession of eight-bar periods he finds himself there let in for it is likely to teach him far more than all the rules formulated by Dr. Riemann and the rest. But has he ever asked himself *why* he does not easily think of 3- or 5- bar phrases, and how he would set about inventing such things when required? The reason of their rarity is because they must be built on a succession of three or five chords; now nearly all the harmony-progressions which the tyro knows consist of two chords—a discord and its resolution. If he will try to remember a few simple progressions of *three* chords—especially concords—such as



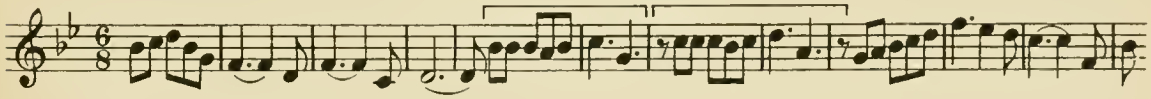
and if he will carefully avoid using the Dominant 7th in its root-position, he will soon find his music become more plastic and continuous.

It was, I believe, Dr. Crotch who first defined Composition as "The art of avoiding full closes." The only harmonies the beginner knows are just the cadence chords, and he has to be shewn the power of 1st inversions many, many times before he realises it.

Though it is of little avail to discourse on the building-up of melody in 2-, 3-, or 4- bar periods, it may be of some use to describe the best methods of extending an 8- or 16- bar melody to one of 10 or 12, 18 or 20 bars; for in the last verse of any song it is frequently desirable to thus expand our subject to larger dimensions by way of climax. The simplest way is to make an interrupted cadence at the end, so that another, more complete, is then required.

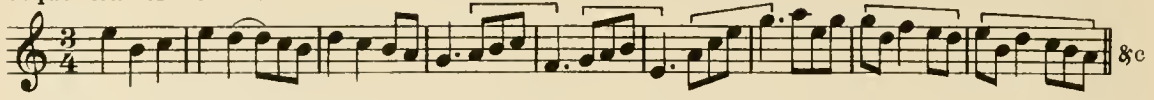



The second way is to repeat some phrase of the melody in sequence: this is generally the 3rd of 4 bars or the 5th and 6th of 8, because they have weak cadences; but it may be any portion. This is Haydn's great device, as seen in the Minuets already quoted, but modern instances are not rare. This, from Gounod is typical:

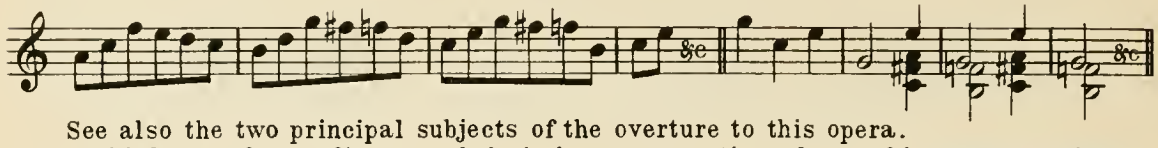


See also *Siebel's* other song, *"Quando a te,"* extended from 16 to 20 bars, and here is an example where both sequence and repeated cadence occur.

The celebrated *Preislied* in *Die Meistersinger* affords an unique example of extreme sequential treatment:



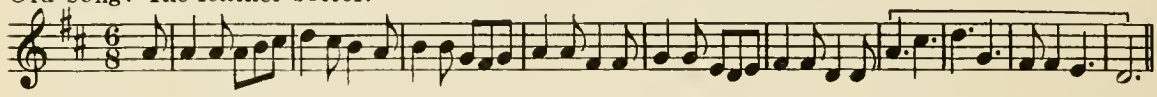

and in the peroration.



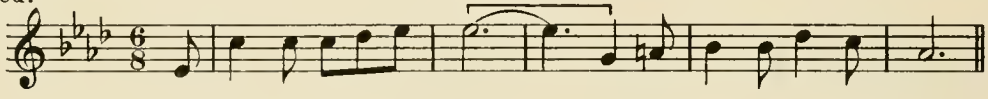

See also the two principal subjects of the overture to this opera.

A third way of extending a melody is by augmentation of one of its component phrases; usually the last:

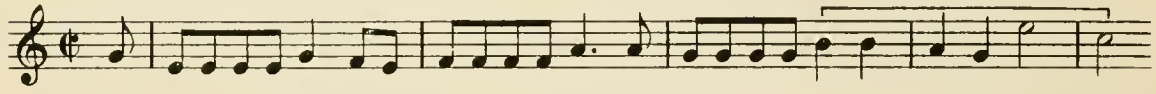
Old song:"The leather bottel."



In Mendelssohn's well known "*Auf Flügeln des Gesanges*" we have a middle cadence thus enlarged:



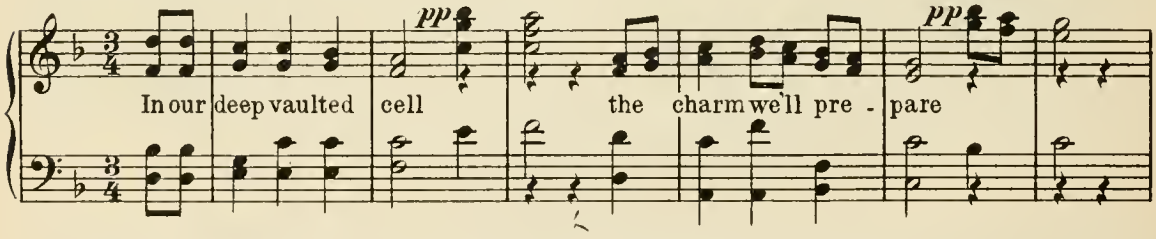
and here is a very quaint example from Sullivan's *Iolanthe:*



A fourth device is that called "echo"; the immediate repetition of a phrase, or half a phrase, in such a way as to suggest its being imitated by another voice. This is familiar to all in verse; e.g.

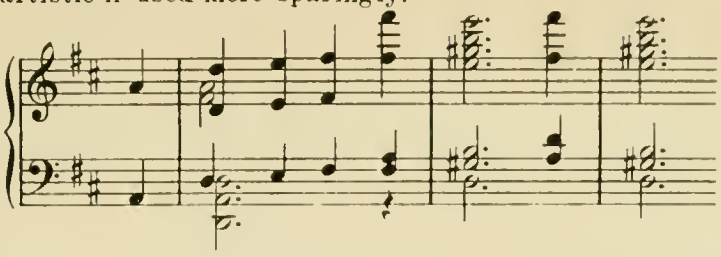
Have ye heard of the widow Malone?
Ochone!

An early example in music may be quoted from the chorus "In our deep vaulted cell" in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas:*




Haydn is very great at it in his sportive moments, but it is equally applicable to serious music, as witness the first subject of the Adagio in Beethoven's Choral Symphony:

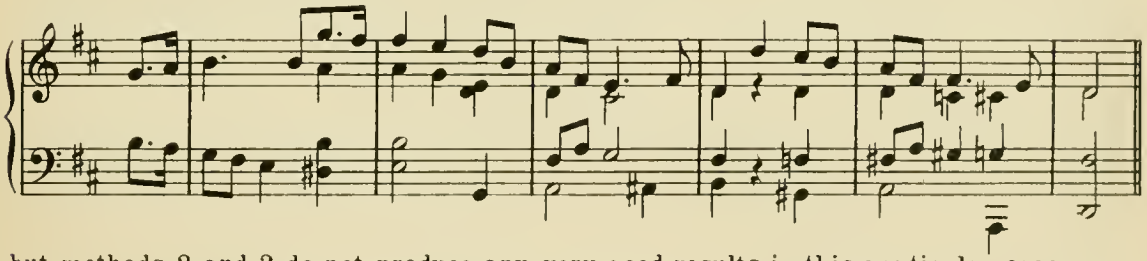
In both of these cases the composer has thus echoed every one of his cadences, but the effect is more artistic if used more sparingly:



R. Strauss:
Tod u. Verklärung.

It will be observed that this is the only device ever employed by Grieg to mitigate the terrible squareness of his songs:

The student will ask how he is to know when these devices can be employed. I answer that observation and imitation of the methods of the composers he likes best will be his safest guide. For the rest it is always possible to use method 1: thus the 8 bars of melody given on p. 7 could have been well made into 10 thus:



but methods 2 and 3 do not produce any very good results in this particular case,

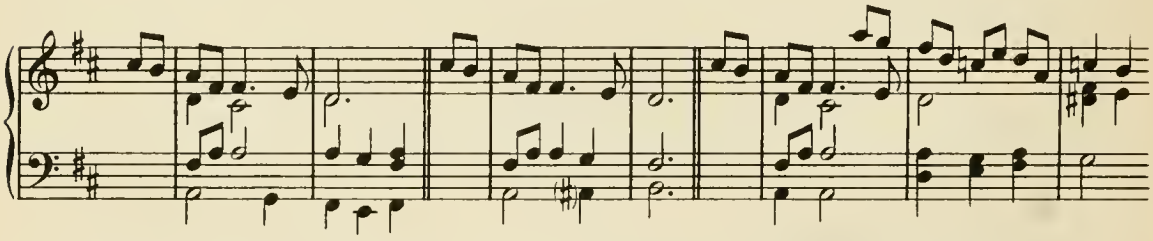
and the close is so commonplace that an echo of it would be foolish.

Every section of a melody must have a cadence of some description, and if a large melodic outline is desired these cadences must all be as weak as possible. It is essential to know all the means by which a cadence can be avoided or rendered inconclusive. These are:

1. By inverting it
2. By interrupting it
3. By overlapping it.

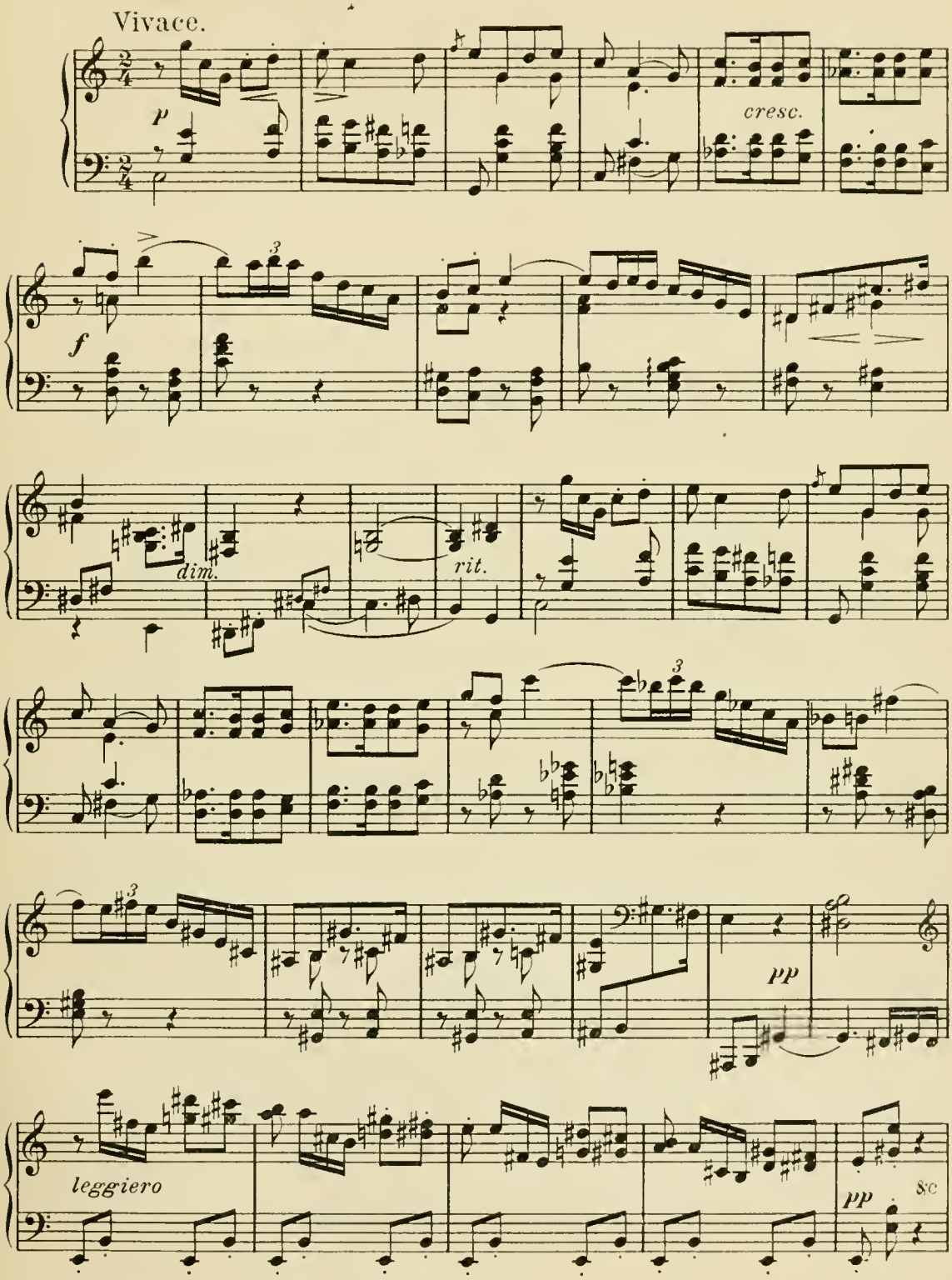
A cadence is said to be *inverted* when one or both of its constituent chords are inversions, but also if the melody end elsewhere than on the Tonic the conclusive feeling is much diminished. Just lately (1907-8) there has sprung up a craze for ending ballads on the 3rd of the key, the effect of which is to make the last cadence much weaker than all its numerous predecessors. But nobody minds.

Inverted and interrupted cadences are available at all times, but overlapping is most effective when a chorus follows a solo, or when a new subject suddenly obtrudes itself. Here are examples of these three treatments applied to the end of our old melody.



The Prelude to *Tristan and Isolde*, in which no real full close occurs (there is not one in the entire drama) shews these devices all in constant operation:

Had the subject of the little "Albumblatt" been worth it we could easily have enlarged it considerably by the application of these resources:



# Chapter IV.

## OF THEMES OR SUBJECTS IN GENERAL.

Leaving the difficult question of character in music for a later chapter, there is yet much to be said at this point concerning the structure of subjects. What most generally happens is that the composer finds a phrase "floating in his head" as the expression goes, and wonders what he shall do with it. If he has any work on hand the phrase is promptly turned to account, unless found grossly unsuitable. If there is no work pending he says "Ah, that would make a nice first (or second) subject for a Concerto" (or Symphony, or what not) and perhaps sets to work to write such a work on the strength of this "inspiration".

A far wiser way is to simply note down such fleeting ideas in a common-place book and keep them till a really suitable opening can be found for them. If one never occurs at all there is no harm done.

I used to suffer much in my youth from that very common trouble of inability to find the right idea at the right moment, but more knowledge and a more logical method of work effected a cure. If you *have* to write some particular work — say, a Quartet — the first thing to be done is to decide several broad general questions. These are: 1, Bearing in mind all that has been done in this class of work, have you got something to say that has not already been better said? 2, What special effects can you devise that are only possible in a Quartet? 3, Shall the tone pervading the whole work be genial or sombre?

Similar questions to these should be asked and answered before commencing any work whatever; the search for ideas would then proceed along more definite channels and be much facilitated.

As regards the structure of subjects it is clear that continuous composition must deal far less with complete melodies than with portions thereof, in order, as before explained, to minimise the full-closes. If such a piece commences with a complete melody this is generally repeated immediately up to where the cadence becomes imminent and then by one or other of the devices described in our last chapter, the close is avoided. More usually in modern composition the initial subject is of quite short extent — a phrase of a couple of bars sometimes — and relies for its interest upon its striking character and its re-iteration under varied conditions. But I think this is going to the other extreme. Long experience has convinced me that many earnest composers are prone to the fault I have condemned on p. 32 of this book — having produced a striking phrase of two bars they are apt to enlarge or continue it by the merely mechanical device of repetition instead of spurring their invention to renewed efforts. Just as the writer of Polkas and Quick-step Marches will turn you out any number of dances, given the first four bars, so would Stephen Heller and Gurlitt knock off little piano pieces wholesale, and so would men like Raff and Rubinstein (who ought to have known better) turn out Symphonies and Quartets in every movement of which the interest entirely evaporates after the first few pages.

This most common fault of insufficient variety of rhythmical interest — for this what it amounts to — is easily avoided by the exercise of a little consideration. For instance, if the composer has thought of the following vigorous phrase, suitable to the opening of an Overture –

let him not go recklessly ahead after this fashion:

even the following, though the third bar has a feature of its own, is insufficient to sustain the interest:

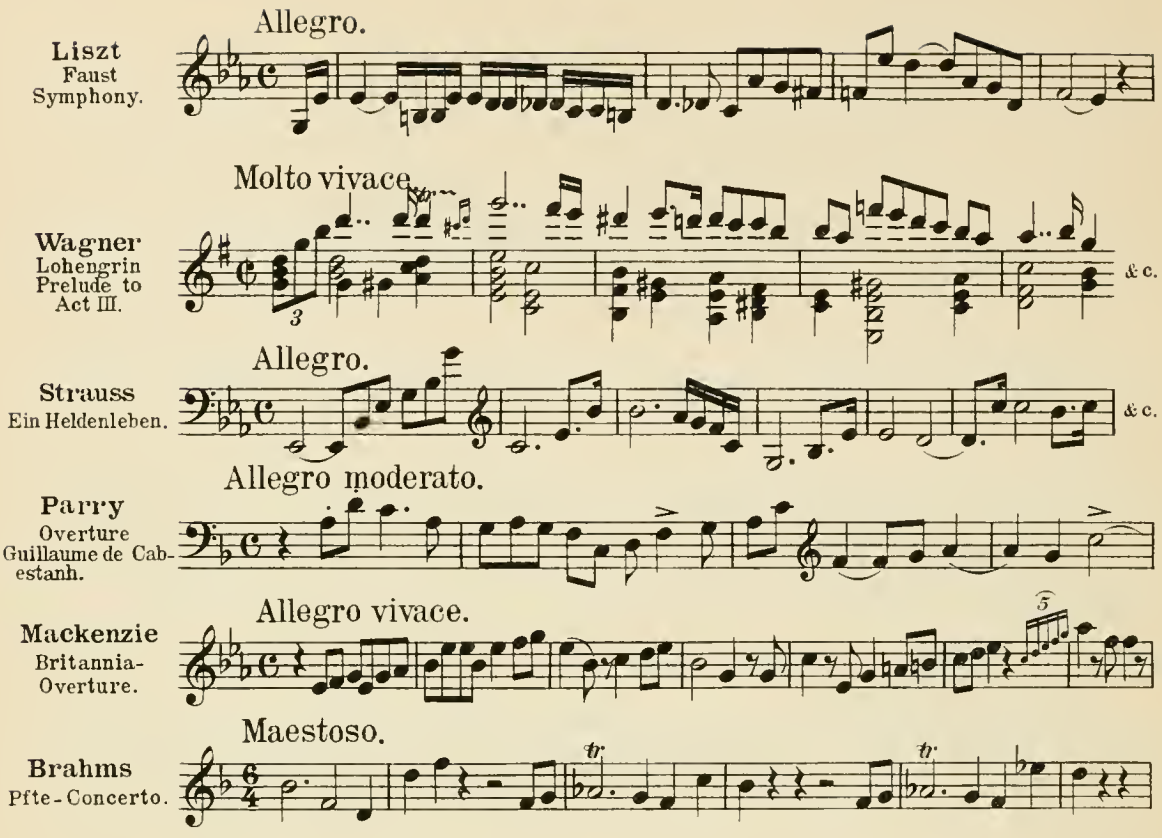
there is more continuity of character in this:

and far more possibilities in this:

The superiority of these last two versions is obvious even to the eye, which discerns a variety of patterns of notes, lacking to the first three.

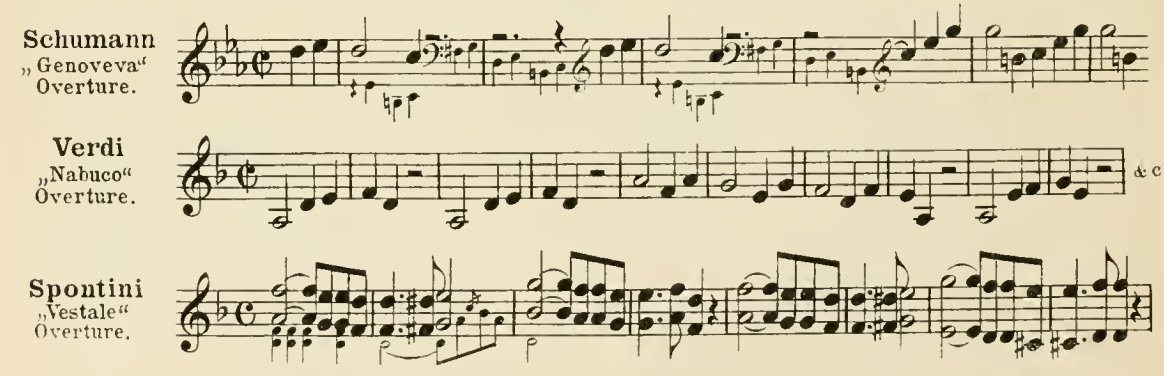
The most important rule of real composition (as distinguished from lyric or dance music) is that *immediate repetition, whether of phrase or sentence or period, only weakens instead of helping the structure.* That a vast number of pieces contain this weakness is an unhappy fact: that some eminent writers — Schubert and Liszt among them — have never known that it is a weakness is undeniable, but let us just take half a dozen energetic subjects by good modern writers and compare them with six others of a similar intention but which repeat their first phrases.

## Strong subjects.




The Liszt example goes for four whole bars without repetition; a very unusual thing with him; Wagner's theme tears along for eight bars, while Strauss's is still longer. Brahms rarely makes long subjects; this one repeats its very powerful second phrase, to its decided detriment.

## Weak subjects.



Everyone must feel the lack of "go" in these last examples, all of which are intended to be of an impetuous character. And I might have quoted many instances from Tschaikowski, so common is this fault with him.

The reason why even brilliant composers commit it is simply that when one invents a powerful phrase—and these are all powerful phrases—one feels that it will well bear building up into a sentence by bricks-and-mortar methods. And so it would *were this all;* in a small piece or a dramatic Prelude, as we shall see later on, it would be rather a strength than a weakness. But in a piece where development is to form a feature we shall require to break our subject up and mould it afresh by this very device of repetition of phrase. Observe how the "working-out" parts of Schubert's C major Symphony are weakened by this fault. Every subject has had its component phrases repeated many times before the development begins and the result is weariness, like that induced by a bad orator, who goes over the same ground again and again. The subject which repeats its phrase furnishes only half the proper amount of rhythmical material, besides wasting its chief resource by premature anticipation. How very rarely do you ever find Mozart or Beethoven committing this mistake!

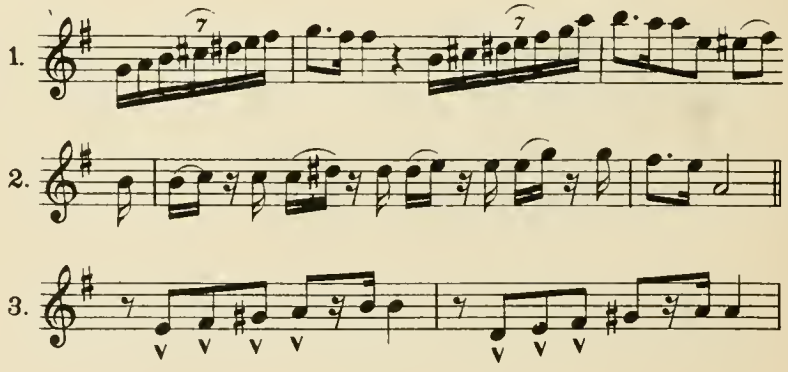
On this head the following statistics are interesting. Comparing the number of different rhythmical patterns which appear in the first movements of six famous Symphonies (up to the end of the exposition) and taking into account the respective lengths of the works we find that

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Beethoven's Choral Symphony has | 18 rhythms in | 160 bars of | 2 time |
| Beethoven's Eroika | 13 | 154 | 3 |
| Tschaikowski's Pathetic | 12 | 141 | 4 |
| Mendelssohn's Scotch | 7 | 148 | 2 |
| Schubert's C major | 6 | 178 | 2 |
| Dvorak's New World | 5 | 157 | 2 |

Sequential repetition is far less of a weakness and often almost indispensable *e.g.* the Oberon Overture:

while mere rhythmical repetition, though easy to use to excess, as we see in Schubert and Schumann, is the chief resource we have for conveying definite character. Wagner's *Walkürenritt,* or the Battle movement in Tschaikowski's Pathetic Symphony exemplify this point. Our art contains nothing more wonderful than those occasional *tours de force* of Beethoven, such as the four movements of the 7th (A major) Symphony, where one small rhythmical pattern acts as a kind of diapered background to the brilliant picture. But it is useless for *us* to try and imitate this sort of thing.

If our subject does not, after all, present any great diversity of accents and rhythms it must be supplemented by one or more tributary subjects of smaller scope — usually a fresh figure capable of being repeated over the series of harmonies that are to lead us to the second subject. To show how this is done let us take one of the versions of the Overture subject given on p. 39, extend it as far as seems suitable and then add to it some accessory subject of similar character but independent rhythm. We shall see presently that this is not actually the best way to go to work, but it is convenient for the moment to waive certain considerations which will affect our choice of such material, and, merely inventing one or two figures of the kind that seems suitable, proceed to introduce one or other of them as best we can. I give the example in pianoforte score, but the rough sketch of an orchestral piece is best written in a compressed score of three or four lines, so as to preclude all thoughts of the piano.



Further than this point it would be unwise to proceed at present. We do not know what we are going to lead up to next, nor how long we should be about it, nor have we yet decided — what ought to have been the very first point settled — what our Overture is going to be about.

The actual point of junction between this subject and the next will be the half-close upon the Dominant of the new key. A series of harmonies must be determined upon–to this too little forethought is generally given — and the existing subject or its tributary must appear to pursue naturally the course thus laid down and reach inevitably the predetermined point, but the best labour and skill will be needed before this portion of the work can be got to sound natural and spontaneous.

Compare the "bridge-passages" of the six movements named on p. 41 and notice how far superior to the rest are those of Beethoven. Then remember that they were laboured at for months before they assumed their final shape.

In the primitive symphonic structures — those of Haydn and Mozart — the joining sections were often very perfunctory — mere padding — but modern composers have either substituted real fresh subjects or else made some development of the principal subject serve instead. This latter course — favoured by Schumann and his imitators — has the drawback of anticipating the "working-out", which is apt to be seriously weakened thereby.

As far as we have gone I have, I hope, made it abundantly clear that in a large work, just as in a song, it is necessary to know what you want to do before you try to do it — that a subject must be chosen and built up deliberately, and instead of ending vaguely, must be skilfully led in some particular direction. Just what shall happen next comes under the head of Musical Form, to which we must now give some slight attention.

# Chapter V.

## PLURALITY OF SUBJECTS - FORM - DEVELOPMENT.

There are many text-books on Musical Form and they all seem written for the amateur and the theorist rather than for the practical musician: they devote themselves (like treatises on Logic) to enveloping a simple matter in a vast cloud of words. Musical form, whether on a large or small scale, may be compared to a sandwich - something tasty between two slices of something less tasty: or, if a less vulgar image be preferred - to the mathematical expression

$$a + b + a + x$$

where $a$ is the first subject, $b$ the second, and $x$ the additional matter in the conclusion, or *Coda*.

This formula serves for whole movements or the sections of which they consist — even for the subjects themselves, where these are complete — as in a Rondo, for instance. For whole movements it may be, and often is, elaborated into

$$2\ (a + b_d) + c + (a + b_t) + a\ x$$

where $c$ is either development or a third subject and $b_d$, $b_t$ represent the second subject occurring first in the dominant key and afterwards in the tonic. In these two formulae you have all there is to say on the subject of musical form.

Once the student has learnt the art of joining one subject on to another it is clear that the varying order in which he shall dispose his themes is a mere matter of detail, presenting no difficulty at all, but demanding only taste and judgement. The devices of Variation and Metamorphosis do not affect the laying-out: Fugue is hardly a musical form so much as a device of part-writing. Dr Prout has shewn that the form of all Bach's Fugues coincides with our first formula.

No; the next trouble is the extent of the second subject and the proportion of our various sections. Beethoven was accustomed to make his second subject (in a Sonata or Symphony) consist of from three to six or more distinct ideas of markedly different accent and rhythm. Modern composers scarcely ever do this, but, having given all their minds to building a good, melodious subject, round it off with a sight *codetta* and there end. From Mendelssohn onwards this has been universally the case: whether the work is thus supposed to gain in unity of character and continuity, or whether the reason is poverty of resource, or laziness of invention, I will not pretend to decide. The architectural structure of modern music has certainly lost much by simplification but the emotional side has decidedly gained.

Here I feel the unsatisfactoriness of general remarks and the difficulty of affording definite help to the young composer upon these vital but subtle matters. Let us see if it would be of use to take the Overture subject suggested on p. 39 and try to endow it with a second subject by main force. This, which was easy enough with our less ambitious efforts, is vastly harder here, where the possibilities are most limitless. By the time one gets capable of writing a large piece one's instinct has, it is to be hoped, got trained to some degree of quickness of perception.

At least we should in any case begin thus. What is the character of our first theme, or (which should be the same thing) what is the character of piece we are trying to write? Bold - fierce - energetic - shall we say an Overture to *Katherine and Petruchio?*

Very well: taking our subject as far as we have extended it, does it not seem more suitable to the gentleman than to the lady? We have already got some subsidiary matter, energetic also; we shall want a fierce, but not too brutal theme for *Katherine;* we shall want a development section suggestive of the strife between the two; we shall want a still more strenuous recapitulation, then by some means it must be indicated that *Petruchio* has obtained the mastery; after which the best ending would be for the *Katherine* subject to undergo a startling transformation and furnish us with a beautiful and suave coda, suggestive of the famous speech in the last scene.

Now I do not in the least pretend that any composer can press a button or turn a tap and do you all this to order, producing an infallible masterpiece; but I do say that if the spirit moves anyone to write such an Overture, unless he think and act as I have above indicated he will stand little chance of producing a decent piece of work. As to masterpieces I am willing to leave undisturbed the popular idea that these only occur by accident. The sensible musician should say to himself. "If the first subject of my Overture be of this character (as above), at least I know that the second subject must not have this strong accent on the 1st and 2nd of its first bar: it must not be in semiquaver passages nor dart about in this restless manner. If I desire contrast it should be a melody in smooth, even crotchets. This would do for the *tamed* Katherine, but not for the shrew. Let us then make a subject in double - bowed quavers that will sound fierce and wild; then by simple augmentation into crotchets without the double - bowing, it will become a smooth melody."

After some attempts and failures it may (it should) occur to him to invent the smooth melody first and pervert it into the wild version.

You will generally find it easier to get a smooth - flowing theme than a wild one. Having evolved the following, which seems fairly suitable

he lays it aside (for it is only to appear thus in the Coda) in favour of

which will make a blusterous second subject. Observe that not till now could he venture to continue the first subject with any certainty. The point which it must reach being fixed he can lead it to an Fsharp bass and effect the junction with ease. It will be for individual taste to say how the second subject shall proceed and for how long; whether it shall run its course and conclude, or be interrupted by a third subject, or be backed up by subordinate matter. The relative length and interest of the subjects is entirely a matter of taste and fancy: the building of them is a matter for judgement and sense.

## Development.

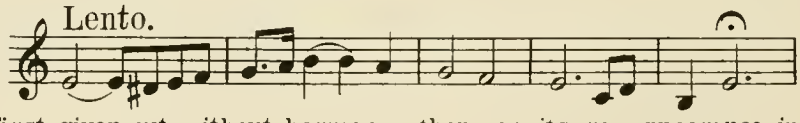
Since, as I have said, the modern practice is to introduce development anywhere – not only as a middle section by itself—we will deal with it here. To develope a musical idea means to extract therefrom more musical interest than would appear to be inherent in it; the methods by which this is effected being these:

1. Expanding or continuing the subject afresh.
2. Harmonising it anew.
3. Varying it by metamorphosis.
4. Adding fresh counterpoint to it.
5. Using fragments of it in new connection.

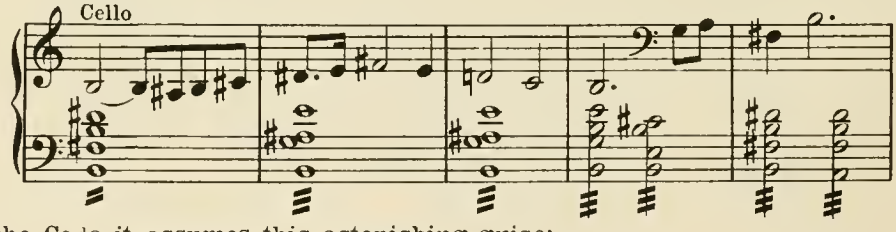
Mere repetition of a theme, or portion of a theme, even in a fresh key, is not development; as I have before pointed out, it simply weakens the impression. This is the fatal procedure of Liszt, which ruins all his most exalted conceptions. The developments of Schubert though often built on splendid progressions of harmony, get terribly wearisome through over-insistence on rhythms already done to death.

To continue a subject afresh demands considerable fertility of invention; this is the favourite resource of Wagner in his later works: the various versions of the *Preislied* in *Die Meistersinger* or the manifold developments of the opening theme of the Overture to the same work being instances which should be familiar to everyone.

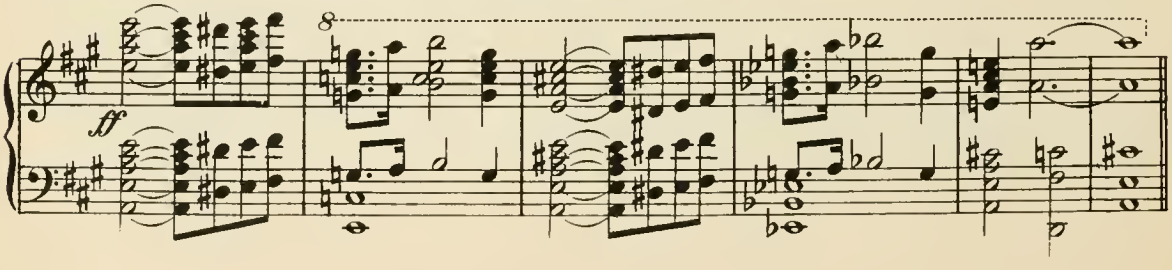
To merely harmonise a subject anew, with however much skill it be done, (and Grieg achieves miracles of ingenuity in this line) is but a poor means of development, unless the subject be modified in some way at the same time. One of Grieg's best attempts is seen in the introductory theme of the Finale to his Cello Sonata. (I have altered the notation from 20 bars to 5 in order to save space.)



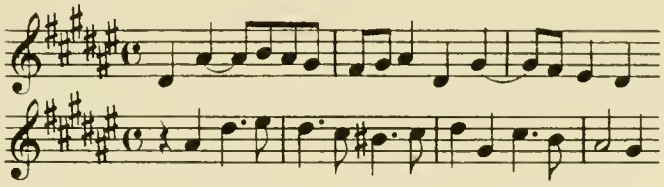

This is first given out without harmony: then, on its re-appearance in the recapitulation, it is harmonised thus:




while in the Coda it assumes this astonishing guise:



Development by Metamorphosis or Transformation is an old device; the first remarkable instance of its use is in Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasia. But Liszt made it his chief resource in composition, although it is generally agreed that his method of employing it is so mechanical as to be often quite the reverse of attractive. Schumann it was, (the most unlikely person!) who gave us in his Piano Concerto and in his *Carneval* the most exquisitely artistic specimens of this device. The following example from Bach is the earliest I know of and renders verbal description superfluous.



The development of a subject by adding another to it in counterpoint has been done by no one better than by Wagner. His *Meistersinger* teems with brilliant examples, of which it is sufficient to quote one. The Second strain of the second theme in the Overture is a rich melody which is presently made to do duty, in diminution, as a counterpoint to the comical chorus of the people:

This device, like Metamorphosis, is seen to best advantage in dramatic music and needs considerable discretion in its employment. There must appear to be some show of reason for the combination, and the subjects must be worth the treatment, which must also appear to be unpremeditated.

These conditions are certainly not fulfilled in the notable case of Raff's Piano Concerto, where the subjects are made to go together in each of the three movements, with results which can hardly be called interesting.

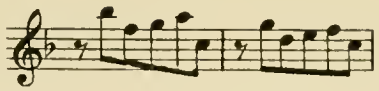
The canonic or fugal treatment of a theme may prove an interesting form of development, but beware of employing these devices merely to shew how clever you are. If you look at the little *fugato* passages in Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony, you will see that they are introduced purely for contrast—polyphony, because the preceding or succeeding passages are in solid harmony, or in unison. If, for instance, we took the phrase of melody which forms the first example in this book and worked it thus:

we should have what some people would call "a clever and interesting piece of counterpoint", but which I consider both stupid and uninteresting. There is no merit in writing in four parts instead of in solid harmony, any more than there is in writing in verse instead of prose: there is here no interest other than that of the original phrase, the other parts being quite pointless. Unless good counter-subjects can be invented counterpoint is the dullest kind of music that exists.

The true and supreme method of development is to take your *raw material*—that is, the important phrases of your subjects, (there must be more than one) — and build them up into new shapes, taking advantage of every diversity of rhythm they possess. There is no finer nor clearer example than that of the working-out of the 1st movement of Beethoven's 8th Symphony. The rhythmical codetta phrase (1), the cross-accented *tutti* (2), and the first bar of the first subject (3) are combined together in divers ways over a large scheme of harmonic progression that leads us eventually to the desired return-point, but has formed in the mean time a well-knit musical structure of quite different interest to that of its components. It is necessary to quote a portion, but the student who has not his Beethoven Symphonies well digested in his brain is unworthy of the name of musician.

The grand thing about this is that after the recapitulation another equally delightful working-out of the *third bar* of the chief subject follows, and—to shew how easy all this

is to Beethoven – the Coda affords us an equally spirited development of the figure



Now I do not say that anybody—not even Beethoven himself—would do just this sort of thing a second time, but the *modus operandi* must be eternally the same. This apparently spontaneous movement represents an enormous expenditure of brain-power. In the developments of less skilful composers you will find the subjects taken and repeated piecemeal without any new interest arising therefrom: is this worthy the name of *development*, then? Would it not be wise—as we have proved in all our other attempts—to try and write the development first, thus experimenting in the possibilities of your subjects? It would be quite easy then to make the exposition a neatly combed-out version of the material employed. Just as in a Fugue, you need to try the capabilities of your subject for Stretto and to invent various counter-subjects to it before starting, so in development. The most helpful advice I can give you is to observe that in "working-out" the relative importance of the subjects should become reversed: the principal subjects are reduced to fragments or disappear altogether and the little insignificant tributary themes assume new and important *rôles*. Prepare these new versions beforehand and keep them dark till the proper time; then they will come as a surprise and a delight. But if you merely extemporise about at random and trust to luck for the result, where does the merit or the cleverness lie?

## RECAPITULATION.

From the 16-bar melody up to the large symphonic movement the most indispensable feature of musical form is the return to the initial idea after the development. Thus the harmonic scheme of this latter is almost invariably shaped so as to terminate on the Dominant of the original key, thus inviting that return. This used to be the principal *point* in the movement, but is not so much emphasised nowadays. We have grown less tolerant of tautology than our forefathers; the repetition of the first part of a movement is seldom practised and the feeling has now arisen that the recapitulation after development, although necessary, is really more of a hindrance than a help to the design; for if there is any climax in the exposition this cannot be so well attained a second time, especially now that both subjects are in the same key. The aesthetic sense demands the return, but this once accomplished, the remaining in the Tonic is distateful and the going over old ground seems cheap; a modified and abbreviated recapitulation is therefore more to our taste.

This throws a much more important function on the Coda than heretofore: in all modern works this forms the chief climax, the best part of our movement – just as the final cadence is the best part of a song. The finest specimen of this modified sonata form is undoubtedly Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll*, but many contemporary works exemplify it to a greater or less extent; *e.g.* the orchestral "tone-poems" of Strauss and the later French composers. To evade pedantic objections it is customary to pretend that such pieces are in a new form; but as I have shewn, there is only one musical form. They are usually dubbed "Symphonic Poem" or "Rhapsody", but the first of these names suggests the weak variation-by-metamorphosis pieces of Liszt and the other the quite shapeless *pot-pourris* of the same writer.

# Chapter VI.
# OF CLIMAX AND CODA.

In every piece of music worthy of the name the interest rises and falls from time to time. In a complete melody, long or short, the most important phrase is usually the last, and the whole tune seems to tend towards this, and after the emphatic point — usually a high note — to fade quickly away. The same natural shape is wrought in large movements, but in these there are also subordinate climaxes, like the foothills of a mountain. Where the shape is clearly defined and one climax stands towering above everything that has preceded it (as in the great *Leonora* Overture, for instance) it is said to be a "dramatic" work.

Where a piece goes on in a series of sections of almost equal interest and with no point of salient importance (like most of Schumann's piano music) it is often called a "poetic" work, but the auditor fails, as a rule, to be much moved by it.

The most obvious means of attaining climax is by a rising sequence on a *crescendo*. Of Wagner's gigantic achievements by this method I need hardly speak: the examples in *Tristan* alone — the end of Act I, the entry of *Tristan* in Act II, the coming of the ship and the unsurpassable climax to *Isolda's* death-song in Act III — all these are so well known and so rich in suggestion that no student can afford to be ignorant of them. The strenuous climaxes of Tschaikowski are apt to contain more noise than substance, but there is one — in the "1812" Overture — that affords an unique instance of huge power attained by a *descending* passage.

Those who compose straight ahead thinking only of the present moment are of course nearly certain to make their subordinate climaxes out of proportion, so that the final effort cannot surpass the previous ones, but he is no composer at all who does not feel the necessity for special effort towards the end of his work — whatever it may be — so as to leave off with a good impression.

One extremely common fault is that of anti-climax: If a movement is loud and animated, making a spirited burst of sound as a climax, the hearer feels stirred and uplifted; he resents then bitterly that his excitement should be let down by a soft, grave conclusion, no matter how well this be done. I first noticed this as a boy, listening to Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* Overture. Here the soft ending is a necessity — the music *must* fade away into the fairy chords with which it began — all the same, it is an anti-climax. Weber's *Invitation à la Valse* comes to a spirited finish, but the resumption of the Introduction, charming as the idea is, robs the piece of half its effect. Liszt ruins nearly all his most brilliant piano pieces in this way. It is not obvious that *soft* after *loud* is weak? If you do want to make a soft ending do it gradually — lead up to it; do not put a noisy climax near to it, or you spoil both. And if you have worked up a powerful climax be content with that and do not qualify it.

The function of the Coda — the tail-piece — I take to be just to enable the composer to avoid this danger. If our piece has had plenty of strong music and it is really needed to end softly, (see the *Siegfried Idyll,* for instance) a Coda of some length can gradually change the character and cause that soft ending to make its due effect. If, on the other hand, the piece has pursued an even course, a Coda working up something on a Dominant Pedal can lead the way to a final effort which shall elevate the whole piece many degrees higher.

The Overture to *Katherine and Petruchio* which we were sketching in the previous chapter shews the importance of the Coda in the scheme of things. There will have to be a certain uniformity of character — bluster and wrangling — throughout exposition, development and recapitulation: this latter will have to work up to the utmost pitch of fury. What then? A calm and peaceful version of the second subject must set in and lead to a climax — not a rising, crescendo climax, but a peaceful, melodious climax. This is the only opportunity for soothing music in the whole piece and should make a delightful effect.

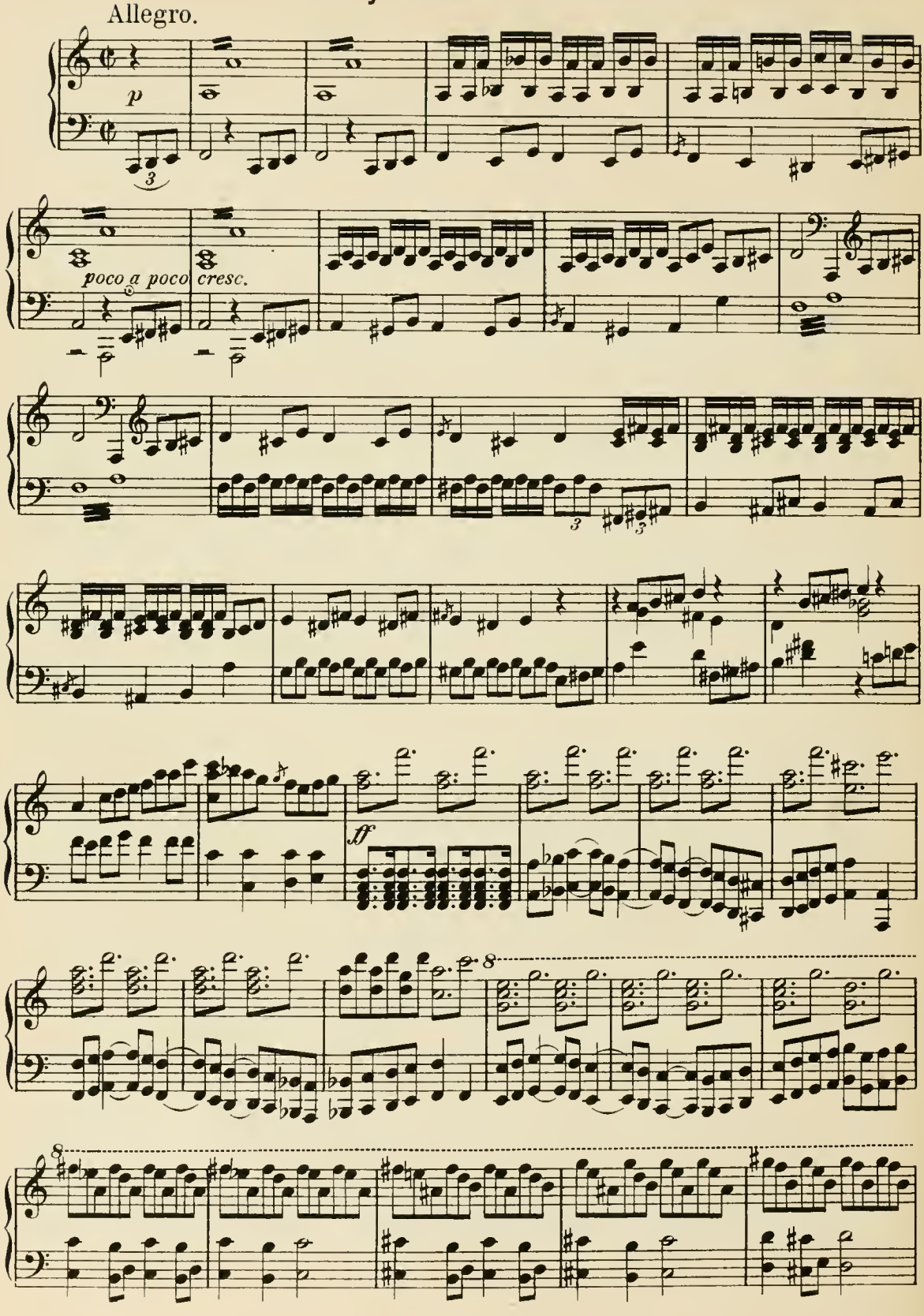
In discontinuous composition the frequent full closes and double bars act like stations on a railway journey. Anything like exalted climax is here seldom possible except in a Coda. The Coda to a set of Variations is often a very difficult thing to write. Obviously it should make amends for the disjunct character of what precedes it by being as continuous as possible. This is why a Fugue is felt to be useful and appropriate as a Finale. One must own that it lacks novelty and freshness; such an example as Brahms' in the *Variations on a Theme of Handel* being hard to surpass. The Finale to Dvořak's Orchestral Variations in C is, however, very suggestive. It is a breathless conglomeration of Variations, Fugue, Polka and uproarious climax, quite bewildering in its headlong *entrain*. Another method is to start a regular Finale, a movement on an entirely new subject, and to bring in the original variation-theme somewhere unexpectedly in the course of this. Schumann, in his *Etudes Symphoniques* affords a specimen — not a very first-rate one — of this procedure, which offers much scope.

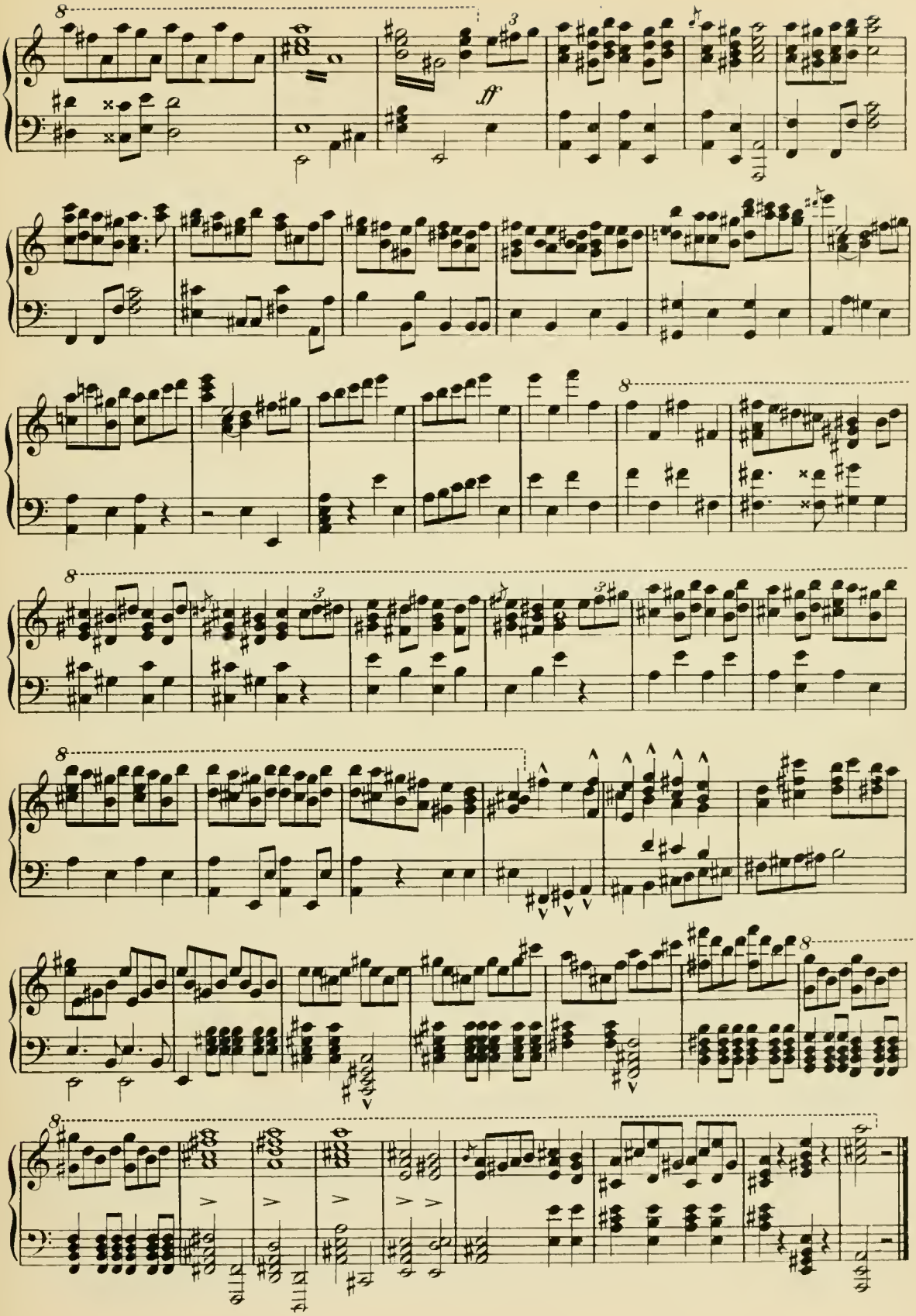
The Coda to a set of Waltzes is the only part where composition steps in at all. Generally it commences with a modulation of four bars (and perhaps a cadenza of four more) leading back to the original key and melody. The principal tunes are then repeated — they should now be all in the same key and with their cadences over-lapped, so as to avoid any stop — after which a few tonic- and dominant-passages bring all to an end. The Codas of all other dances, including Marches, need to description; the shorter they are the better for practical purposes.

I will conclude this section with an interesting lesson in composition by quoting two climax-codas to the same work by different hands. In the year 1845 Liszt desired to add to his 14 Hungarian Rhapsodies a 15th, consisting of a transcription of the celebrated war-march by prince Rakoczy; but hearing that Berlioz had taken the same idea and was going to bolster up his *Faust* with it, Liszt, with characteristic unselfishness, laid his score aside and was with difficulty induced to publish it many years later, after Berlioz' death. The difference between the two works is characteristic. Berlioz, with keen dramatic instinct, reserves his working-out for the Coda, which becomes a brilliant battle-scene. Observe how the phrases overlap and press ever closer and closer together.

This is a remarkable and almost unique display of craftsmanship on the part of this composer. Liszt, on the other hand, has tried to make a symphonic piece, with a lengthy working-out in the middle, a full recapitulation and then a Coda, which I here give as an example of just what *not* to do. The constant exact repetition of phrases already worn threadbare, the two fatal pauses, which allow all the excitement to evaporate, and the weak last cadence — from Mediant $\frac{6}{4}$ to Tonic — any one of these faults would kill the most vigorous of movements, and all the noise of the full orchestra cannot make the last 19 bars of Tonic chord into a climax.

# Rakoczy March – Berlioz Coda.

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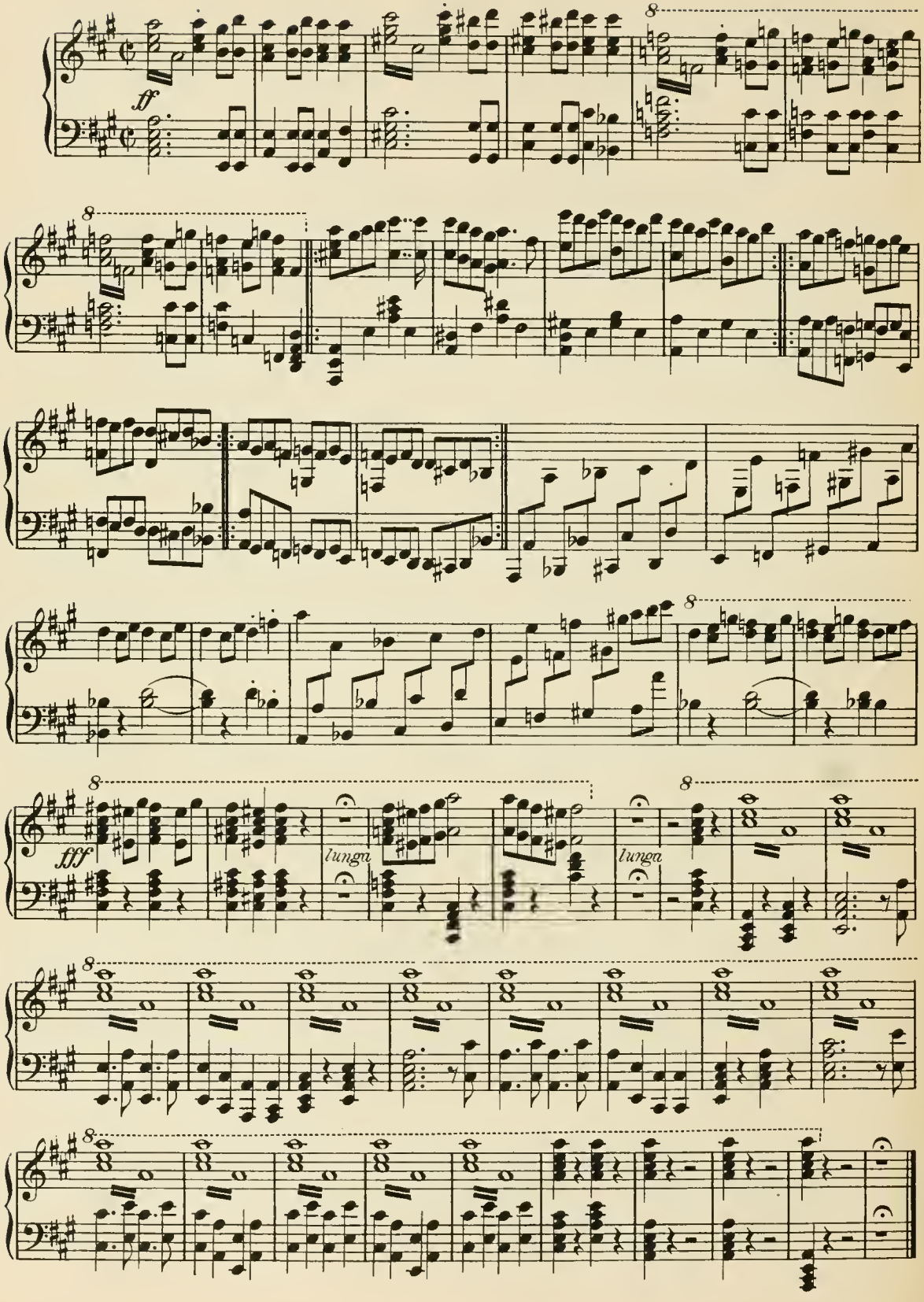
## The same – Liszt's Coda.



# Chapter VII.
# SLOW MOVEMENTS, SCHERZOS ETC.

Hitherto we have discussed general principles and the features that are common to all kinds of music: we are now coming to details the multitude of which is so great that they cannot be adequately dealt with in a single volume like the present. What is wanted is a kind of Handbook or Lexicon, comprising a series of short practical articles on the constitution of — Arabesque — Barcarole — Czárdas — Duet — and so forth through the alphabet. Such a book I hope to supply some day, meanwhile a few remarks here on the Slow Movement, the Scherzo, the Introduction and the Finale must suffice for the present.

We all know how it came about that a work in "Sonata form" is expected to consist of four movements on well-established lines, but we are apt to forget that it is by no means well always to fulfil expectation exactly, and to follow lines rigidly. Scarcely any of Beethoven's later piano Sonatas have the regulation four movements; scarcely any by his followers have not. A modern Quartet is of almost intolerable length: why does the writer think he has not done his duty unless he has given it the full set of movements? I Implore the young composer to ignore precedent in these matters and to do just what will make his work interesting in itself. Mere length is no merit.

The Slow Movement is a good deal influenced by the kind of work it forms part of, the pianoforte giving less scope for broad *cantabile* melody than stringed or wind instruments. It is also clear that, as it will occupy far more time in performance than an Allegro of the same (written) length, the plan will have to be more restricted. Those instances where the whole programme of exposition - working out — recapitulation and coda is gone through (*e.g.* Tschaikowski's 4th and 5th symphonies) however fine they may be, are apt to weary the attention. Then the subjects being generally long complete melodies (not, I trust, so long as those in which Raff used to indulge), demand little development, if any. When the pace is slow rhythmical extensions and contractions of periods are not very effective, though easier to accomplish than in quick music. The weak point of a slow movement is generally the bass, which it is difficult to keep from being dull and "stodgy." One must endeavour to make some of the "bridge-passages" placed high up or devoid of harmony, and one must not forget the precious resources of the Pause and the Cadenza. Composers are always afraid of being thought vulgar or frivolous if they try to endow their slow movement with a definite character — such as making it a Serenade, Canzonetta, or Love Scene—but it is, I think, better to risk sneers than yawns.

## The Scherzo.

Richard Pohl said once in a famous criticism: *"Gute Scherzos können Sie alle machen"*— Composers can all write good Scherzos. I venture, however, to differ from him and to say instead that audiences are very uncritical when it comes to a matter of dance-rhythm. The Scherzo of the average German composer makes me want to cry. It is simply like any piece whatever of Schumann's played one in a bar. I really cannot see anything more humorous about one in a bar than about four. A Scherzo wants to be something more than quick: a very little humour goes a very long way in music, but there must be some. What the would-be writer of Scherzos really needs is to study his Haydn and learn how to make capital out of odd accents and overlappings and omissions of bars.

But unless he possess some slight sense of humour he had better do like Brahms and not try to write Scherzos at all. After all, there are other excellent substitutes: think of the Waltzes of Tschaikowski, the Furiants of Dvořak, the Polkas of Smetana! Is not the English Hornpipe, Jig or country-dance as suggestive and rich in possibilities as the old Minuet? Conservative musicians may be shocked at any deviation from "Sonata form"; but so long as the substitute for the Scherzo is light and gay there is ample precedent for unconventionality in it.

Have you ever thought *why* a Scherzo is always in triple time? It is not only because of its relation to the Minuet, but because triple time has twice as many short accents as it has long, and this is better for quick music than duple time, where short and long accents are equal in number. There is an ingenious Scherzo in Borodine's 2nd Symphony where by taking common time *Prestissimo* the secondary accent is made to disappear altogether, the semibreve becoming the unit of beat.

Since, as I have pointed out above, it is the long bass notes that are apt to cause dulness in a slow movement, so in a Scherzo the best way of ensuring liveliness is to get plenty of sprightly phrases in the bass; where this cannot be done at least break up the bass and let us have as little of it as possible. Inability to keep away from the low octaves is the chief reason why Schumann and Brahms cannot make their music sound gay. You have probably never thought what an immense influence the particular octave your theme lies in has on its character, but I shall have more to say on that head presently.

There is another musical convention that we are getting rather tired of; that is the Trio to a Scherzo. This was all very well so long as the relationship to the Minuet was preserved, but it is not so essential to the Scherzo as such. When this is on so large a scale as some of Beethoven's the piece would certainly gain in effect by not being played all over a second time. A Scherzo in Rondo form, like Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel,* seems more what is wanted, or even in the ordinary shape but with no Trio; only a big working-up in the Coda. I cannot see that the shortness need be any objection.

## The Finale.

In writing a large work the composer is always haunted by the fear that his Finale will be a failure. Consequently it generally is. But I think that here, as elsewhere, conventionality and want of forethought are the stumbling-blocks. Remember how Mozart used to spoil work after work because he thought it his bounden duty to end with an idiotically trivial Rondo. Remember how Tschaikowski has injured all his Finales out of deference to the convention that a Finale must be extra noisy, so he bangs away on the big drum till you wish you were dead. One need not fly in the face of precedent, but it is weak-minded to accept and follow any rules blindly, as if that were all one had to do. As to forethought, have we not seen in every point and at every turn, how indispensible it is to look ahead? Why do all the dramatists come to grief over their last act? Why do most novelists find their story go to pieces at the end? The old, old reason: they have not planned their climax first and then led up to it - they have tried to extemporise

a work instead of constructing one. If you wrote your Finale first you could at least insure yourself against an anti-climax, but I know that-since all the habit of your thought is against it-you will hate to do this. Well, at least give it some consideration before you come to it; say to yourself: "What have I done in my other movements? So and so. Then I must try to do something here as different as possible from all that." And remember that there is always something new and good to do if you will only rack your brains to find it instead of doing the first thing that comes into your head. What a brilliant idea was that of Tschaikowski to put the Elegy of his Pathetic Symphony last! After a battle piece, the nation's mourning for the hero. How natural! While Beethoven, after his glorious Eroica funeral march, had to spoil the picture with an inappropriate Scherzo and set of Variations, because he dared not defy the conventions!

The Finale to a Sonata or Symphonic work of any kind is generally in either "First-movement" or "Rondo" form. The Development section of the former is apt to prove rather a drag on the impetuosity which one generally strives for (though this *ought* not to be the case); but to employ Rondo form is to court the inevitable charge of prolixity. It is not, of course, every subject that will bear the amount of repetition necessitated by Rondo treatment; but — and here you see the value of looking ahead — if the other movements are kept fairly short a lengthy Finale is perfectly appropriate. Our fore-fathers never needed to consider this matter, and their auditors do not dare to complain, but *we* have very impatient critics. Not that we write to please them.

## The Introduction.

In the early days of music composers used to write Introductions very often with the simple idea of making their work last longer. We have not that excuse now and consequently Introductions are less in favour with our impatient audiences. In the case of a Cantata or extended tone-poem it is felt to be undignified to plunge at once *in medias res*, and a vague orchestral introduction is supposed to assist in fixing the attention of the audience. Of this I have my doubts; but it may at least serve to conduce towards the mood in which we desire the work should be listened to.

After what I have said above concerning forethought it seems almost superfluous to point out that an Introduction cannot well be written until after the movement which it is to usher in has been at least roughly sketched. You will need to know what key to aim for, to hint at what is coming, give fragmentary versions of future themes and so on. This seems very obvious, yet I constantly find students gravely writing pages of pointless introduction with the idea that this will stir the fire of their imagination and set a masterpiece on the boil.

An Introduction may be commenced in hundreds of different ways, but it will generally be at first vague in its tonality and gather definition as it proceeds until it culminates in a half-close on — or modulation to — the Dominant of the coming key. It will usually be slow, because it is difficult to be indefinite in quick music. Still, a *presto* introduction is a conceivable thing if the character of the work demands it.

I cannot recall a prominent example of such a thing so here is one chance at least for the seeker after novelty.

# Chapter VIII.

## PIECES WITH ONLY ONE SUBJECT.

Pieces with two or more subjects generally aim at conveying varied impressions to the hearer: where a single vivid effect is desired it has been found that the shape and the material are better reduced to their simplest terms; the best results being attained by the careful handling of a single pregnant theme. It is comparatively easy to fit together several musical ideas by the methods already described, but to sustain the interest in one subject demands the very highest skill.

As regards the composition only two things are possible: either we must cling persistently to our subject, or we must leave it and return.

The first plan is that pursued in Fugues, Madrigals and other such polyphonic pieces, but it is also the course taken in the modern Dramatic Prelude. The Theme and Variations may also be placed under this heading. The drifting away from a theme and returning to it is, of course practised to a slight extent in Fugue, but only casually. It is the plan called "simple song form" or "early rondo from" embracing the small piano pieces described in Chap. II as well as nearly all Etudes and short instrumental pieces, light or serious, some rambling modulations—purposely indefinite—taking the place of additional subjects. Let us examine these different kinds of music *seriatim*.

1. The actual Fugue, vocal or instrumental, is but little practised in the present day, less because of its difficulties (which are very great) than because its devices are all so trite and well-worn as to afford little scope. The reason of J. S. Bach's unapproachable greatness as a fugue-writer is the reason of Chopin's unique power as a writer of Mazurkas—an almost boundless invention. Inferior writers, when they have written a piece of 4-part counterpoint on a solitary phrase, seem to think they have done something clever. The oratorio choruses of Spohr, Costa and many English writers of the 19th century are pitiful examples of this. If the student really needs to write a Fugue the following hints may be of service. (I am supposing him to possess the ordinary "book-knowledge" of the subject).

a). Be sure that your subject is a striking one.

b). Invent at least six good counter-subjects to it before starting to write:—not necessarily all for use.

c). Have much more 3-part and 2-part writing than 4-parts, in order to afford relief to the work, the composer and the listener alike.

d). Have plenty of episodes and endeavour to make these something better than mere perfunctory sequences.

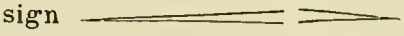
e). Do not try to employ all the devices of Stretto, Inversion and the rest in one fugue. It is mere vulgar ostentation to say "See, how clever I am!"

f). Do not write a Fugue—or anything else, for that matter—unless it is *necessary*. (This is perhaps too hard a saying for most.)

Bach—and next to him Wagner—wrote many splendid movements which were not Fugues, but were pervaded by the spirit of fugue. The slow movement of Bach's Concerto for 2 violins is a peerless example of what I mean: a subject entering from time to time in one or other of the parts, but for the rest a piece perfectly free in the writing. The scene of the Masters' Committee-meeting in Act I of *Die Meistersinger*, and the scene between *Walther* and *Hans Sachs* in Act III of the same, these are modern specimens well worthy to place beside the work of the great Leipsic Cantor and calculated to make the student's heart sink within him as he realises how far he has to

go before he reaches such heights. As regards actual construction this kind of writing may be said to lie half-way between the Fugue and the Rondo, of which more anon.

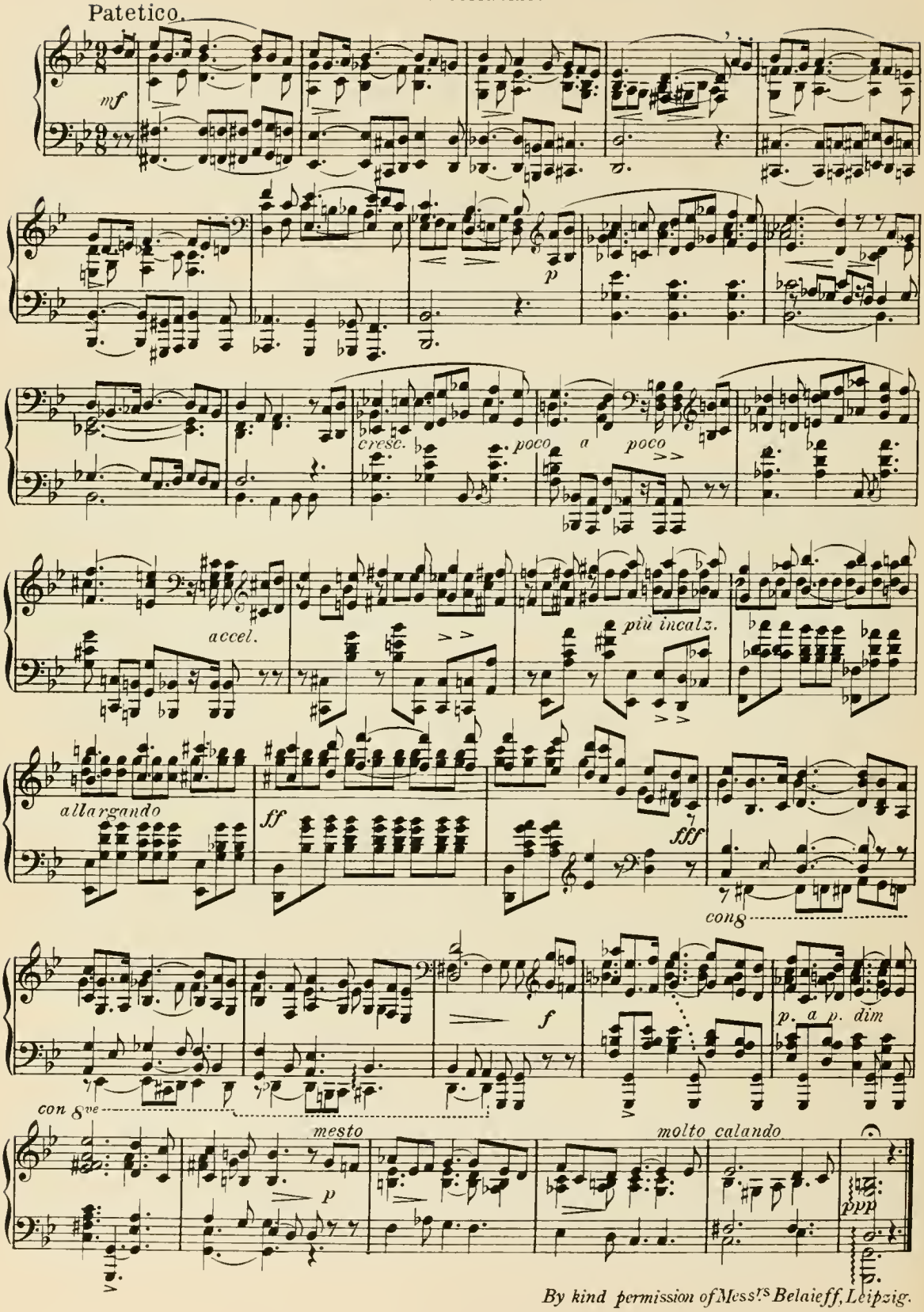
2. The Dramatic Prelude—or The Prelude, as I shall simply call it, is a modern evolution of the utmost importance, and I must deal with it at some length. The term Prelude was applied by the older writers to an introductory piece of loose texture, indefinite subject-matter and no particular aim, save that of arresting the hearer's attention and enhancing the interest of the more definite music which was to follow. It should always be remembered that in music little care and absolutely no control is exercised in the matter of titles to pieces. The "Preludes" to Bach's 48 Fugues are sometimes Toccatas, sometimes Fancies in several short movements, sometimes instrumental Madrigals—all sorts of things.

Since his time vast quantities of Preludes of the Etude type have been written, generally of scarcely any intrinsic value; but the 24 Preludes of Chopin, which were at first modestly entitled "5th and 6th books of Studies" shewed us the dawn of a new art-form. While about a third of their number might be called Etudes, the remainder are short mood-pictures, each on a single subject. They carried the art of tone-painting far beyond the reach of contemporary imitation and, for sheer perfection of workmanship, have not even yet been equalled. But it was Richard Wagner who gave a definite outline to the Prelude and has left us, in the orchestral introductions to the separate Acts of his music-dramas, from *Lohengrin* onwards, a magnificent gallery of tone-paintings. These are not indeed always on a single subject, the accessory material sometimes being very important, but the same unity of design and character is to be found in all, (the Preludes to Act I of *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* excepted) the purpose being always to depict the particular mood which governs the coming portion of the drama. This is effected by insisting upon a phrase or figure of a very pregnant character and also by preserving absolute continuity throughout the piece, which generally commences vaguely, gathers power, rises to a climax and then fades away quickly. Thus the shape of the Prelude may be designated by the familiar musical sign 

In the year 1892 the firm of Belaieff published 4 books of Pianoforte Preludes (24) by Anton Blumenfeld, a very important contribution to the literature of the instrument. On a far larger and more definite plan than those of Chopin, they lack the subtle grace and variety of that composer, while possessing an intensity and power all their own. Some are like Etudes in character, but all have the form of the Prelude and an acquaintance with them is indispensible to the would-be composer. Their weakness is the common weakness of the Russian school—insufficient variety of rhythm in the pianoforte writing. Unbroken flights of semiquavers extend for whole pages and melodies of undeviating outline often go far to spoil the dramatic intention, but a true and often passionate climax is always attained. In emulation of these fine pieces several other present-day composers—even English—have lately cultivated the Prelude with considerable success, prominent among them being the Russion, Anton Scriabine. His 24 (why always 24!) op. 11, are original and beautiful, approximating to the Chopin model. He has followed these by numerous others, of less equal merit, one of which, op. 27 in G minor, I must take leave to quote entire, as the most striking specimen yet produced of the genuine article. Scriabine's chief characteristic is his abundant and original use of the "French Sixth" chord: apart from this and his curious round-about resolutions of passing-notes, his harmony is natural enough. But the laying-out of this particular piece seems to me well nigh perfection.

# Prelude in G minor, Op. 27, Nº 1.

A. Scriabine.




*By kind permission of Messrs Belaieff, Leipzig.*

This I consider to be the musical field which presents the widest scope for future developments—for original invention and individual fancy. The published literature of variations is very extensive and almost bewildering in its variety, but the older and more mechanical methods, such as the *Passacaglia* or *Chaconne* (variations on a ground, or fixed bass) and the Variations of all composers before Beethoven, may be safely ignored for the present. It is indispensible to know Beethoven's and Chopin's principal piano variations, as well as Dvorak's and Elgar's orchestral variations: after these study all the contemporary examples you can find; for this is one department in which the latest efforts are certainly the best.

In text-books you are told that Variations consist of either, (1) the melody embroidered while the harmony remains unchanged, or (2) the harmony varied, the melody remaining as before, or (3) alteration of the time or rhythm. This description might have sufficed for the primitive variations of Mozart and Haydn, but in the modern examples all these devices, and more, are simultaneously employed, from first to last. The fact is that there are two ways of looking at this subject. Either the writer wants to stick to his text—to say the same thing over and over again in different language, or else he wants to shew how many absolutely different character-pieces the same raw material can give birth to. The display-variations for Violin or Clarinet of the old *virtuosi* exemplify the first view; the Piano-variations of Beethoven and Brahms illustrate the other, and many contemporary composers stand hesitating which course to adopt. The average listener of course admires the old-fashioned method, however trite the result, and affects to be quite unable to grasp the "far-fetched" modern plan; but I cannot see that this matters. One writes for the satisfaction of one's own aesthetic sense and for no other reason whatever, so that it behoves us simply to study well what has already been achieved in any department and then to try to contribute our mite to the ever-growing fabric of art.

Practically, I would bid you observe that the ordinary Variation of the Mendelssohn school is a poor thing. It consists in inventing a figure of one or two bars and plastering this on to the original scheme of harmony, so that each variation becomes a miniature (and pointless) Etude.

It is true that this description may be said to apply to Beethoven's 32 Variations in C minor; but this work justifies itself by being a Chaconne; moreover, the exceeding brilliancy of the instrumental writing strikes criticism dumb. But did you ever peruse Stephen Heller's 33 Variations on the same theme? Anything more futile it is hard to imagine. Here you see the difference between brains and mere musicality.

Beware of making amorphous and pointless variations. Each one ought to be a little picture, and the more definite the character the better. By far the best way to proceed is to write at least three times as many as you feel to be advisable—for the more you write the more possibilities you discern—ruthlessly sacrifice the less good ones and then lastly, consider carefully in what order you shall place them so as to get the best contrasts of key and style, and above all, climax. In doing this you will frequently have to modify the endings and will find it sometimes good to run two or three together. The old fashion of a complete full close to each and a fresh start in the same key, needs to be considerably modified nowadays. Observe in the Dvořák Orchestral Variations, the fine effect of the joining passages and Candenzas—what importance they give to the specially attractive variation which they usher in!

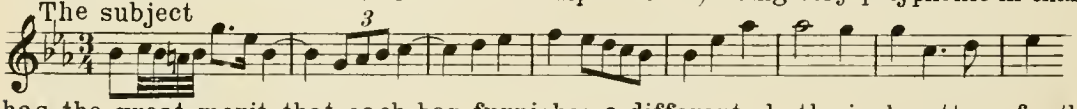
The device of Metamorphosis is a valuable one and has been used with good effect in modern variations (see especially those to Dale's piano-sonata) but it easily becomes mechanical and consequently unmusical. There is no *meaning* in the transformation of the A, S, C, H, theme in Schumann's *Carneval* and it is only the exceeding beauty of the results which justifies the trick.

In concerted Chamber-music Variations are often written for the slow movement or Finale; rarely, if ever, for the Scherzo or first movement. It might be well therefore to try experiments in these directions.

There is little to say about what is called "Early Rondo form", this being the most primitive of musical structural devices. To put mere padding instead of interesting subsidiary matter between the repetitions of one's subject is only advisable in very small pieces. But two eminent writers have attempted this on a large scale and it seems to me worth while to examine into their methods and results, these being rather unusual.

Richard Wagner, in his two *Albumblätter* for Piano and his *Huldigungsmarsch* for Orchestra, has given to the world three curiously constructed pieces, analysis of which will be very edifying to the student. In the Albumblatt in C we have a fairly rhythmical 16-bar melody overlapped at its conclusion by another part entering with the same tune; this after four bars makes a different and cadence-less continuation of seven bars, when this in its turn is overlapped by a fresh voice (in the tenor) recommencing the subject in the key of G: after seven bars a persistent sequence on the first bar brings about a well-managed return to the subject for a third time and the melody is now extended to 23 bars. A Coda on a Tonic pedal, insisting on the opening phrase, concludes the piece. Here is the melody of the first 28 bars, from which the method can be gleaned:

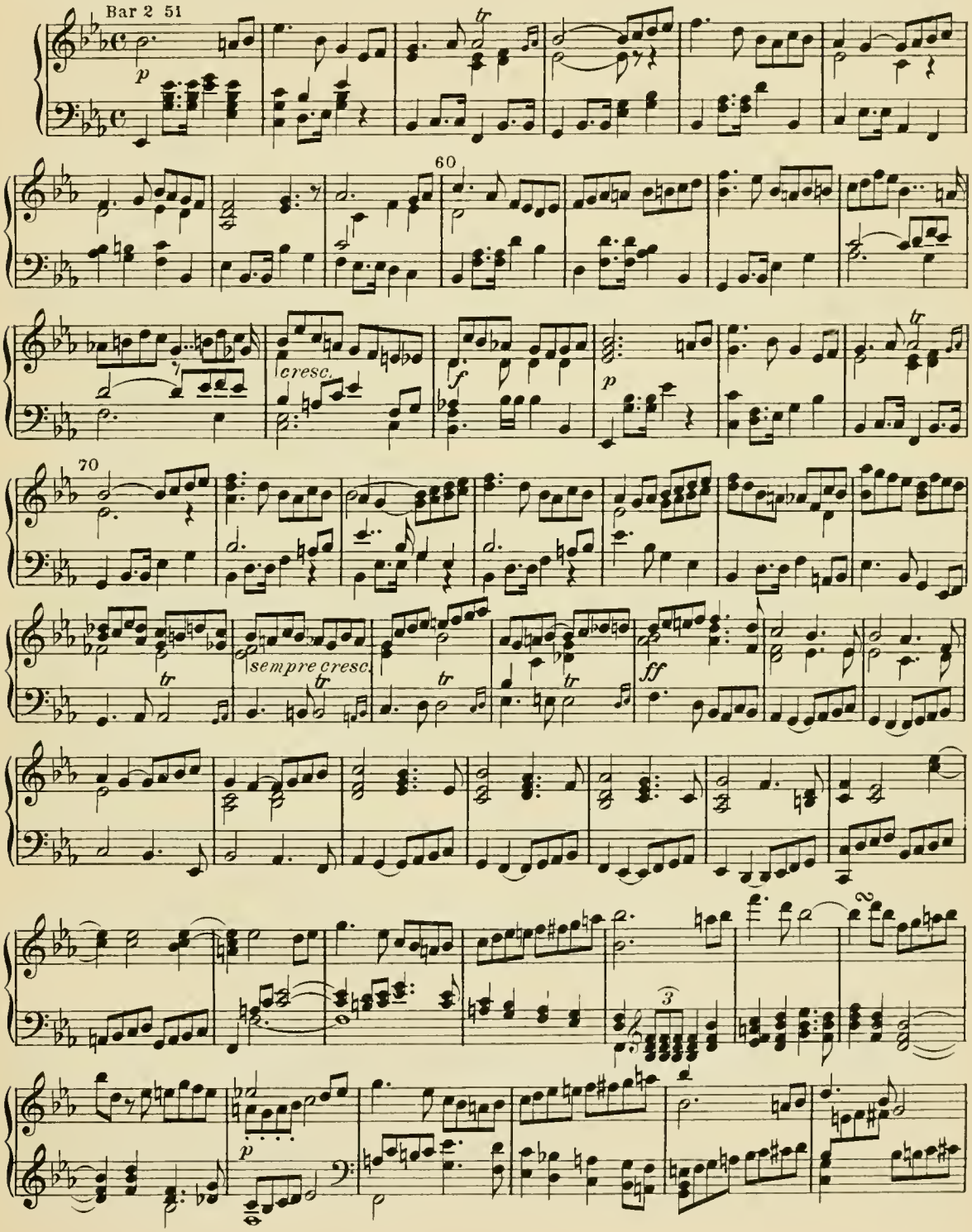
This unpretentious but original little piece has been arranged for Violin and Piano, gaining considerably in the process. The somewhat similarly built Albumblatt in Eflat would have been better as an orchestral piece, (it has been stupidly arranged as a Violin solo with orchestral accompaniment) being very polyphonic in character.




has the great merit that each bar furnishes a different rhythmical pattern for the composer to work on when he develops it. I quote a portion:

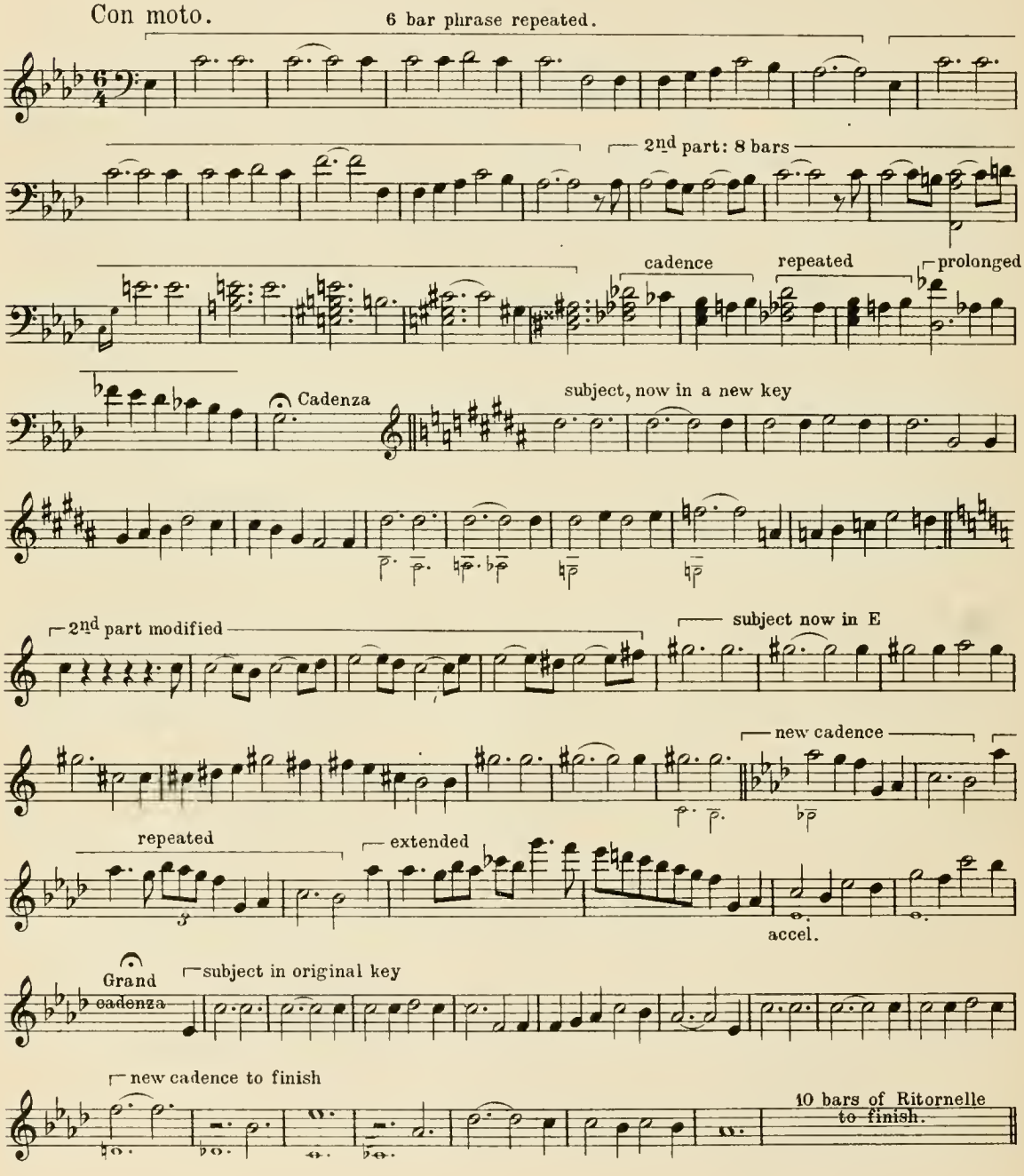
Fascinating as this is, it must be owned that work of this sort—this *chewing,* if one may be pardoned the expression, of the separate phrases of a theme—shews to better advantage in the *Siegfried-Idyll* or the *Meistersinger,* where the material is more plentiful and varied.

The *Huldigungs-marsch* is a beautiful piece of work, but the feeling of dissatisfaction it always gives is certainly caused by this method of building—the return to a subject without having done something different, so as to make the return desirable. All the clever sequences and the splendid counterpoint cannot prevent us wishing for a change of topic,—another subject to make a contrast. It will be worth while to give a sketch of at least a portion of this:



It seems like sacrilege to criticise such writing as this, but for all the beauty of the detail I think it obvious that as a whole, this March falls short of success, for the reason named.

Still more clearly is the unsatisfactory nature of the "unary" principle exhibited in the writings — one dare hardly call them compositions — of Franz Liszt. Here, instead of being dazzled by wonderful counterpoint we are dazzled by wonderful instrumental effects; but remove the adornments of the music, come down to the actual framework and see what you find! I will give just the melody of the well-known *Liebestraum* Nocturne for piano; this being one of many identical in shape.



It may be urged that in such a piece, adapted as it is from a song, the weakness of design is of no grave importance. That is true, but I quote this piece as a typical specimen of Liszt's procedure, which he applies to large and small pieces alike. His *Vallée d'Obermann* in the 2nd book of *Années de Pelerinage*, shows an important and poetically intended piece ruined by this weakness. The reader would do well to procure and study it before reading the following remarks.

It is a piece on an entirely emotional basis, which is defined by three quotations on the fly-leaf. Two are from the *Letters of Obermann* — probably unfamiliar to the majority — and the third, which is pretty much to the same effect, is from Byron's *Childe Harold*. So far as poetry can be rendered in prose all three are to the effect that the speaker feels thoughts within him which pass the bounds of language to express: he has experienced all the sentiments possible to humanity, yet cannot put them into words:

*"But as it is, I live and die unheard,*
*With a most voiceless thought; sheathing it as a sword."*

Conceding (what some will be disposed to deny) that this is a possible poetic basis for a piece of music, let us see what it demands. Emotion of the most intense kind, perpetually repressed and resulting in no achievement is an alluring, but not very practicable programme. Of all methods of illustrating it, the one which seems least likely to be successful is the making of an extended piece on only one subject.

It is at any rate a very remarkable subject. A striking phrase of 4 bars, modulating in the strangest way through the relative minor into the tonic minor; a thing that at the time it was written must have sounded detestably original, yet conveying by its strangeness a feeling of gloom and despair scarcely attainable by any other means. A 3-bar counter-phrase repeated continues this very suitably and then Liszt — as usual — runs aground. Now here is an excellent exercise for the student: given these 12 bars, what does he think ought to be done next?

The cause of the difficulty is a very simple and usual one; the repetition of the phrases, particularly in the two last bars. Had these been something of this sort —

the melody could have been coaxed along for some distance yet before actual new material became necessary, but Liszt flies to his one resource, that of repeating his first phrase disguised by fresh harmony. He never learned that rhythmic and melodic outlines are just those which most need relief and variation, so he does this.

Upon reaching this point he starts all over again from the beginning, putting the part from bar 9 onwards in B flat minor (!) and then making an incoherent modulation, back to Eminor, next comes a mournful tonic pedal passage, which would have made an excellent conclusion, but no! he has only just begun. Observe the exceeding beauty of the effect which follows, gained simply by using the upper octaves of the piano after the lower — an effect which Schumann, Brahms and their followers never think of.

But after repeating this and adding a responsive 4-bar phrase of precisely similar outline (four times repeated) he is fain to break off with a cadenza and try a new version:

He succeeds in making this go for as much as eight bars before it comes to a full– a very full— close, after which a long series of 2-bar phrases— each religiously repeated— carries us on in a halting fashion for another two pages. With broken chords, pauses and silent bars the agitation subsides and then the C major section re-appears in E major with a middle accompaniment of semiquaver triplets.

A strenuous attempt is now made to work up a climax, but the new continuation of the subject–

is as refractory as its predecessors, and after no less than *twenty* fruitless repetitions the piece leaves off, rather than concludes, no more advanced than when it began. The opening phrase actually occurs, with scarcely any modification and certainly no development, no less than *sixty seven* times in the course of about 300 bars.

I have been thus minute in my description of this finely– intentioned but hopelessly unsuccessful piece of Liszt's because the faults are so patent and just of a kind that the young composer can appreciate. Nor can the piece be dismissed with contempt, for it has very fascinating points, like nearly everything by this author. It is, in fact, exactly like what a clever musical prodigy would produce if one gave him the opening bars and bade him extemporise upon them. This is not *composition* at all, as I have said before.

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# Chapter IX.

## CHARACTER IN MUSIC - EMOTIONAL TECHNIQUE.

It now becomes necessary to consider what are the means by which character or emotion of any desired kind is manifested in music – what laws if any, govern emotional technique. This is a large and very difficult subject to write upon and one which, so far as I know, has never been adequately dealt with.

One cannot fail to notice that there is much music which is architecturally good (I hesitate to call it clever) but which is not intended to express anything in particular, being merely shapely and comely. Now the greatest composers have all begun by writing music of this pallid, featureless kind, and emotional power – if they ever attain to it – comes only with experience and knowledge of resources. Towards these it is our present endeavour to guide the student.

The first questions that present themselves are these: (1) What emotions can music endeavour to arouse and what definite mental pictures can it depict? (2) By what technical mechanism does it proceed?

The ardent musician notices from the very first the mental effect of certain harmonic successions – the infinite power for change afforded by the multifarious resolutions of the Diminished Seventh and Augmented Fifth chords – how the German Sixth followed by a major $\frac{6}{4}$ on the Dominant seems to open a door and let in light – how energetic is the melody that shoots up a tone beyond its harmony note and how pleadingly soft that which falls a semitone short of it – such things once noticed become colours to his brush, and if he will only realise them definitely he will be able to extract ever new effects from them. This is the grand difference between the mature artist and the inexperienced student who crams into his work all the beautiful chords he has recently learnt, with the result of making no definite impression at all.

What can music pretend to illustrate? Many have been the squabbles and discussions over what is called Programme Music, and all sensible people are agreed that actual objects cannot be described or suggested, save indirectly and by association of ideas. We have to "make-believe" a great deal before we can accept the cannonshots and groans of the wounded, whether in the *Battle of Prague* or in *Heldenleben*. A trill on the Flute or Piano is not really in the least like a bird, nor is an arpeggio like the ocean wave. These things and many like them are puerile conventions, acceptable only to the vulgar. But in dramatic music association of ideas will allow us to suggest indirectly many things not strictly within the scope of musical art – especially with the assistance of the *Leitmotive*. The only true function of modern music is to describe and arouse certain moods and emotions – not all, by any means: – those that require words for their expression are beyond music's reach; but the following is a fairly complete list of the sentiments which we may fairly endeavour to depict.

1. Agitation.
2. Agony.
3. Dance music.
4. Despair.
5. Energy.
6. Exhilaration – Triumph.
7. Expectation.
8. Gloom.
9. Grotesqueness.
10. Humour.
11. Joy.
12. Love.
13. Mystery.
14. National element.
15. Pastoral music.
16. Pathos.
17. Patriotism – Martial ardour.
18. Peace – repose.
19. Rage.
20. Romance.
21. Sacred music.
22. Storm.
23. Terror.
24. Yearning – pleading.

I have placed these in alphabetical order for convenience of reference, but Agony, Gloom and Despair are closely related in feeling and therefore in the means of their expression; nor is there much difference between Love and Romance – Grotesqueness and Humour, or Joy and Exhilaration.

To answer our second question, as to the means by which we proceed, I will first mention the *prime colours* with which we paint. Music must be pitched either high or low; if high it produces a feeling of exaltation, if low a feeling of depression, whatever the composer may intend. It must be either loud or soft: as it swells the emotion becomes intensified; as it fades the sentiment swoons. Finally, it must be quick or slow: the heart beats with it and the feeling rises or falls with the speed more than with anything. All this is elementary and known to all, but we must always bear in mind that these six factors, height, depth, quickness, slowness, loudness, softness, are like modifying tints, which can be used to intensify or mitigate the emotion of any passage to which they may be applied.

For the rest, each sentiment in the above list has a special phraseology. Space will not permit of my describing this very fully, but I will give some general ideas, leaving the student to work out the details for himself.

## Agitation.

Even if the *tempo* be nominally a slow one the actual movement must be quick, which is easily achieved by the use of demi-semiquavers. If the piece be orchestral use "double-bowing" and tremolo freely. A minor key is more suitable than a major and the more restless and indeterminate the tonality the better. Syncopations and rugged accents greatly aid the effect, but the movement must never cease; if it comes to a point the implied pause must be filled in after this fashion:

It has long been a tradition to make the principal subject of an Overture a wildly agitated one, sometimes without any reason.

## Dance Music.

The study of Dance-music, limited and vulgar as the field may seem, is very necessary to the high-class composer. It is a pity that no book has yet been written giving the exact peculiarities of all dances but there are plenty of good (and bad) collections, or Albums, and it is perhaps better for the composer to find out things for himself. But he must beware of accepting any one tune he meets with as genuine or typical.

The structure of music intended for dancing to is of the simplest, consisting invariably of 8-bar periods. Only in the dramatic portions of stage Ballets is any departure from this plan permissible, but when dance-music is treated symphonically, as in the Minuets and Rondos of Haydn, the Waltzes of Tschaikowsky, the Scottish Rhapsodies of Mackenzie &c, all the resources of musicianship are brought to bear upon expanding the periods and avoiding the perpetual cadences, which stand like five-barred gates in the way of progress. Smetana and Dvořák have raised the symphonic treatment of dance-tunes to great artistic heights, and their works are most valuable to the student.

## Despair — Desperation.

To depict despair all the means of obtaining gloom — low-pitched music, slow and soft, yet with emphatic points — require to be utilised. The Prelude to Act III of *Tristan,* whether it be taken as illustrating the wounded hero's condition, or his faithful servant's or simply that of the ruined stronghold, certainly conveys the most vivid picture of desolation ever attempted in music.

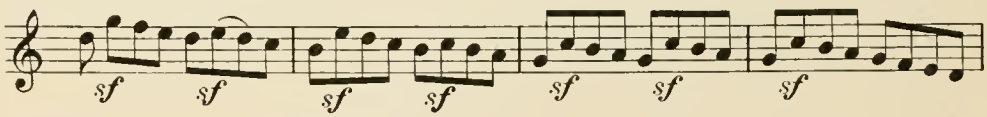
Two features are here to be specially noticed; the groaning effect of the first chords, with their grating major seconds striving upward, and the empty, hopeless feeling conveyed by the bare violin parts, with their artful dissonances, as they seem to seek for help. The second subject of this Prelude would be better described as pathetic.

Desperation is another thing altogether and more akin to rage than despair. Here the music would be as strenuous as possible. Wagner has plenty of fine examples; *e.g.* Alberich's frenzy at the loss of his ring, *Brünnhilde's* betrayal speech in *Götterdämmerung,* Act II and the despair of *Amfortas* in *Parsifal,* Act III. The music to all of these is very loud and fierce, with violin passages tearing through it. Noise and harsh harmony are the essential features.

Sometimes at a powerful climax in a Pianoforte Prelude Blumenfeld and others have marked a particularly vigorous cadence *"Disperato"* to induce the performer to "go for it."

## Energy.

Energy, determination, courage, even wrath and vindictiveness, are pretty obvious in their technique. It will be agreed on all hands, I think, that these were the sentiments which Beethoven above all other men knew how to pourtray, and some general principles may easily be easily deduced from his practice. If we take such orchestral movements as the Finales to the C minor and A major Symphonies and the *Leonora* Overture, or such pieces as the Finales to the D minor (Dramatic) and Appassionata Sonatas for piano, we see that their tremendous energy depends not only upon the hurry and bustle of their quick passages — there are plenty of pieces that one could name that go with a rush, but are not in the least energetic — but upon unexpected bursts of sound and erratic *sforzando* effects. One of the most thrilling moments in the C minor Finale, for instance, is the simple joining passage —




and the gradual entry of the strings running up the scale in the Coda of the *Leonora* simply

takes one's breath away. Even the effect of a crescendo cut off at its climax and followed by a wholly unexpected pianissimo is a factor of energy, paradoxical as it may appear.

It is easy to understand why passages in notes of widely differing length would in themselves appear more forcible than notes of equal length. No kind of scoring would make a Choral sound energetic; this

is a thousand times stronger than the whole Battle-chorus in Schumann's *Paradise and the Peri.*

It is very difficult to sustain the caracter of energy for long; nearly all Marches degenerate into mere noise long before the end — Berlioz' transcription of the *Rakoczy march* being a glorious exception. One should study the last half of Act II and the first half of Act III of Wagner's *Walküre* for a lesson in immense and unwaning power.

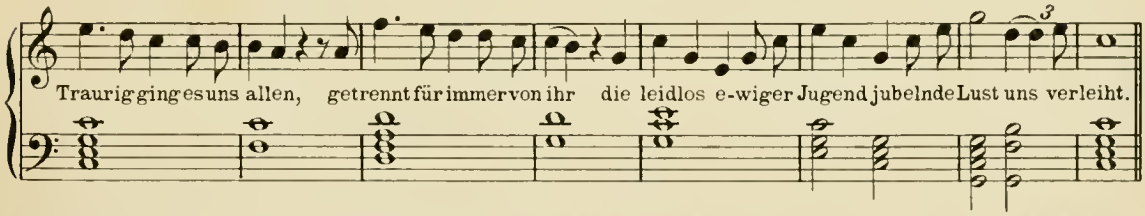
## Exhilaration – Triumph.

In the expression of these sentiments a strong burst on to a major $\frac{6}{4}$ chord (generally from a German sixth) is the most telling device; but it has become so hackneyed through careless use in unsuitable or unimportant places that it is difficult to employ with any degree of freshness. In his desire to be heroic and dignified Wagner has terribly over-used this effect in the recitative portions of *Lohengrin.*

Exhilaration, like Joy, demands imperatively the major key, plenty of noise, an animated, well-marked tempo and melody that leaps from one note of the chord to another. For instance, the following phrase

would be far more expressive of exhilaration than this:

the accented dissonant notes here being quite ruinous to the sentiment. To give a glad feeling the harmony must be simple and concordant (see JOY). In his recognition of this fact Wagner runs perilously near to bathos in the last scene of *Rheingold,* where *Froh* says —




The two *scenas* of Weber — that of *Caspar* in *Der Freischütz* and that of *Lysiart* in *Euryanthe,* — are rather poor as music and more than indifferent as composition, but, thanks to the spirited passages, the roaring top notes for the voice and plenty of dominant six-fours, fulfil their dramatic purpose admirably.

## Expectation.

Suspense and expectation are generally indicated by either of two very different methods; a well worked up *crescendo* on a dominant pedal, or a pause of silence. Wagner has used both of these means admirably; the former at the entry of the hero in Act II of both *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger:* the latter in the *Fliegender Holländer* and *Lohengrin.*

About the reckless use of the fine dominant pedal effect by Rossini it is not necessary to speak; the modern composer passes his tawdry Overtures by with a smile; but it should be pointed out that nothing is more easy to employ than a Pedal and that its mental effect (when on the dominant) being expectation of what it is to lead to, the composer should be very careful lest his mountain in labour only produce a mouse. This is particularly liable to happen when leading up to the recapitulation of a second subject in a movement, or – even worse – towards the end of a Coda. Here it is the *Tonic* pedal that is needed; never the dominant.

## Gloom – Grief.

Gloom, Mourning and Awe must be associated with very slow and soft music. Strange to say, it is not at all necessary that the harmony should be dissonant. The Prelude to Act II of *Götterdämmerung* is horribly sinister, but for utter heart-breaking desolation nothing can approach the Dead March in *Saul,* which is in C major. But any lively Polka played ♪=46 on two Flutes and a Bass drum would produce pretty nearly the same effect. The dreary feeling which can be inspired by a very slow tempo and hollow harmony is remarkable.

Apart from this one instance, it has been generally felt that gloom calls for the minor key. It will be noticed that a minor triad sounded in a low octave is very much more dissonant than one in a higher octave, for an acoustical reason which I will credit the reader with knowing.

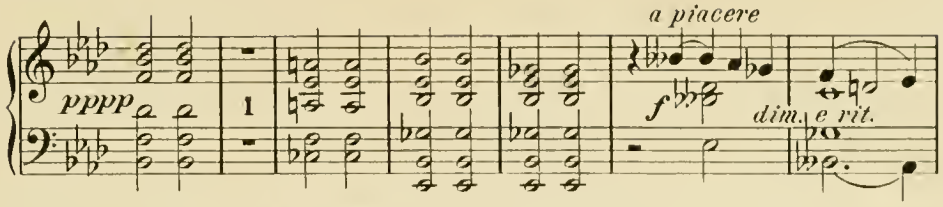
In the orchestra the dreary colouring may be much enhanced or mitigated by the choice of instruments. Brahms has written a Serenade, for no conceivable reason, for orchestra without violins; a more depressing work it would be hard to find. In choral writing basses singing in four parts would produce a fine gloomy effect, but I do not know of any really good example, the limited compass making such an effect difficult to employ.

If ever there were tears in music – without the aid of words – they are to be found in those marvellous last bars of Beethoven's *Eroica* funeral march. The manner in which the theme stumbles along in broken, sobbing fragments is realism of the truest, most poetic kind.

But since I am writing especially of modern composition and for modern composers I should do grave injustice to a brilliant living writer were I to omit a description of the Funeral March which concludes the first Piano Sonata of Anton Scriabine. This remarkable movement is all the more meritorious from its parallel to that of Chopin, the new work suffering not at all by the comparison. The first four bars will give some idea of the whole. Notice the groaning effect of the left-hand part in the fourth bar.

But instead of giving us, as Chopin does, a Trio consisting of a simple tender melody (which some people consider mawkishly sentimental) Scriabine conveys the idea of a funeral hymn in the distance by a series of minim chords of an originality beyond all praise.

This is broken in upon by a sharp burst of anguish from the mourners thus:




and after a short resumption, fades away, the march being then repeated according to convention.

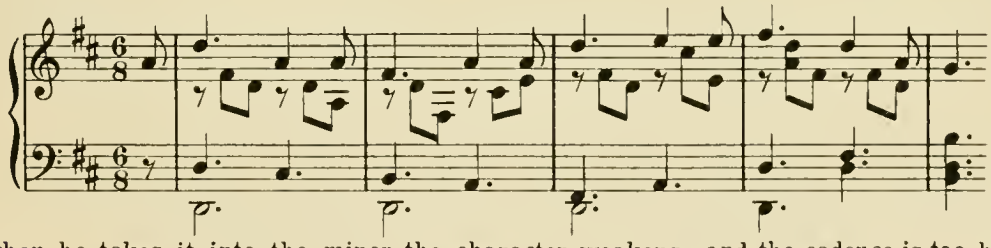
And this is a convention I should be glad to see abandoned, or at least modified. Nowhere is repetition so dreary and wearisome as in a funeral march: the thing itself necessarily verges upon the dull and the solemn effects lose terribly (like all effects) in the recapitulation.

## Joy.

Leaving the student to discover for himself the means whereby Grotesqueness and Humour are to be expressed, I have next to point out that most of the resources employed to indicate Exhilaration are also suitable for Joy; *i.e.* lively, swinging movement, major key, loud music with clear harmony and rising, leaping melody that has few accented dissonances. The following example will readily occur to the mind of the musician:

and the Prelude to Act III of *Lohengrin,* the $\frac{6}{8}$ and $\frac{6}{4}$ sections of the Choral Symphony Finale and the opening of Strauss's *Heldenleben* are all pieces which – whether intentionally or not – produce the same effect on the mind. Quick $\frac{6}{8}$ or $\frac{12}{8}$; – not $\frac{3}{8}$ or $\frac{9}{8}$ – is the most suitable time – the connection of ideas with the quick-step march and the country dance is fairly obvious – the melody bounds about harmoniously and the harmony is kept as concordant as possible. The accompaniment, in order to avoid passing-notes, sounds best in evenly repeated chords.

A very beautiful song by Brahms, *"O liebliche Wangen!"* is the sole instance known to me of his indulgence in the emotion of rapture. For the first 8 bars or so it goes to admiration.



but when he takes it into the minor the character weakens, and the cadence is too heavily harmonised to produce the right impression:

## Mystery.

I had written several pages and given many quotations anent Love-music, but the whole subject can be summed up in the one piece of advice: Be as beautiful as you can.

Mystery is only too easily described in music. The average organist's improvisation before service is a good, though unintentional illustration; but any meaningless succession of the latest new discords may be employed. Melody, except of the most fragmentary and attenuated, must be carefully eschewed. And really, I don't know that there is anything else to say, except that it always excites the wonder and admiration of the critic and the quiet scorn of the musician.

## The National Element.

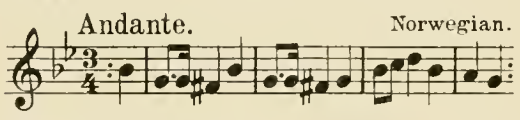
For this the composer is chiefly dependent upon the characteristic and best known features of national dances, such as the Scotch Reel, the Hungarian Czardas, the Spanish Bolero &c. But national colour is best conveyed, not by the mere quotation of these hackneyed tags and mannerisms, but by an occasional delicate suggestion of them, and also by a careful avoidance of anything distinctive of a hostile character. Thus Debussy has made a little piano piece called *Soirée en Grenade*, which, by an occasional figure in the well-known rhythm of the *Habanera*, seems perfectly Spanish, while Grieg, by being more Norwegian than the Norwegians themeselves often seems mannered and unnatural.

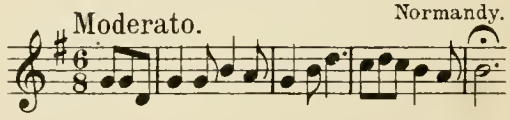
Taking advantage of popular ignorance, composers are wont to imitate "Eastern music"—*i.e.* Chinese, Indian, Arabian or African—by one simple and effective method; namely, to run up and down this scale

which is not so much Eastern as Hungarian. They also utilise the Drone-bass a good deal:—good old drone-bass, that serves so many purposes in music!

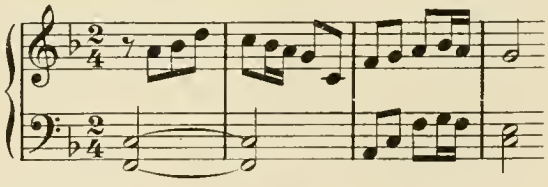
## The Pastoral Element.

Shepherds—of the Watteau, or stage variety, I presume—are supposed to have been addicted to the futile amusement—in the good old days—of playing to their sheep upon a rough kind of Oboe called a Musette. But the Pastoral music of convention is rather that of the bagpipe then of the Oboe: the *Musette* (trio of a Gavotte), which is always on a drone bass, would be considered to sound far more pastoral than any genuine shepherd airs, such as

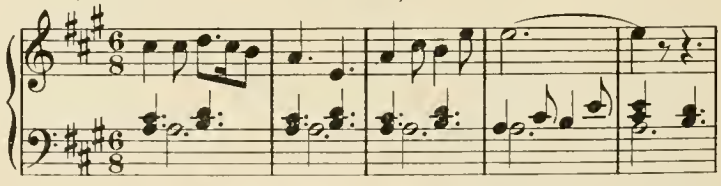



or the Cor Anglais solo in *Tristan*. The simple drone bass is such an obvious point of character that, whether we hear it in Beethoven



or in Gounod's *Faust* (where it has no business)



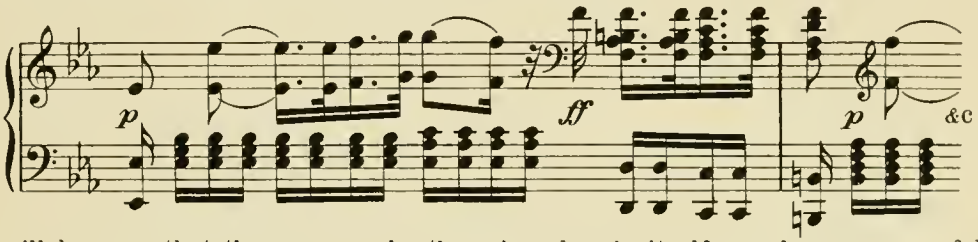
we say at once "ah! Pastoral music!" and are *so* pleased at our cleverness in recognising it. But you must admit that the effect is by now more than a little cheap and stale.

## Pathos.

The technique of Pathos demands close study. Its various degrees – Yearning, Melancholy, Gloom, Despair, Agony – must be clearly differentiated, otherwise we shall be unable to supply the right quantity as well as the quality of emotion for each situation and our climaxes – especially in an operatic work – will tend to neutralise each other. People are fond of extolling such exquisite successes as Gluck's *"Che faro"* and *Lohengrin's* farewell to *Elsa,* but they are quite oblivious of the fact that even the greatest composers have frequently turned the emotional tap on far in excess, and (not so frequently) far in default of the demand.

Of course one must remember that in vocal music the best intentions may be ruined by indiscreet performers, who on seeing any indication like *con dolore* or *espressivo* will always turn on their tremolo to the utmost. Also in ballads the same tune has to do duty for all the emotions described, which have then to be supplied by the singer.

Practically it will be found that the principal factor in expressing pathos or sorrow of any degree is the musical equivalent of the sigh or moan – the fall of an accented discord. Of course this must be backed up by some or all of the natural concomitants of gloom – minor key, slow tempo and generally, soft tone, but with occasional explosions:

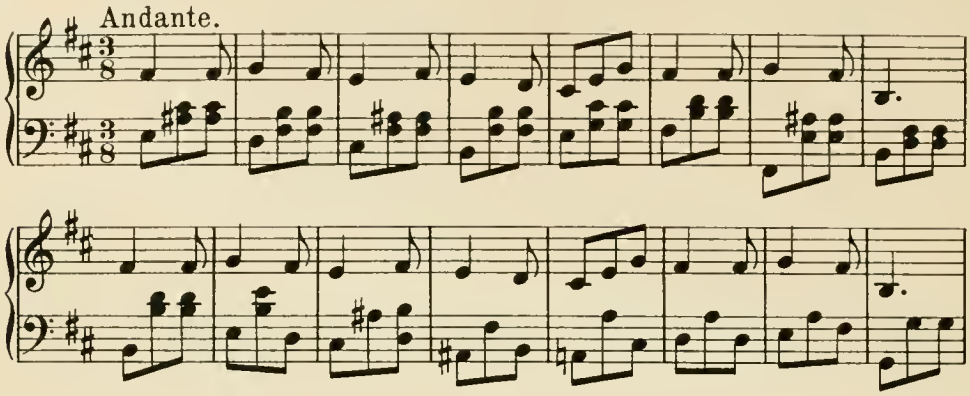



It will be seen that the reason why the minor key in itself sounds more mournful than the major is not only the comparative depression of the third and sixth, but the fact that there are three minor seconds coming down the scale instead of two and there is the further complaining interval of the augmented second between the seventh and sixth. Therefore minor melodies abounding in accented passing-notes, especially in triple time (causing more prominence to the dissonances) are invariably pathetic: *e.g.*

Allegretto moderato.
"My love, she was so pure and white, no o - ther maid had eyes so bright; she
filled with love the heart of me that ful - ler might it ne - - ver be. &c

The pathos of this dear little song of Grieg's is much enhanced by several of the accented passing-notes being over mournful chords, such as the Neapolitan sixth, which thus acquire a double intensity. All minor discords excepting the dominant 7th have a quality of sadness, and when one of their notes is flattened this feeling is intensified. To put a suspension or passing-note over them is to still further heighten their effect, though this may easily be carried too far, ending in sheer hideousness. Not but what there are occasions when such hideousness is needed, as for example, in the *Verwandlungsmusik* between the scenes of the third act of *Parsifal.* But this by the way.

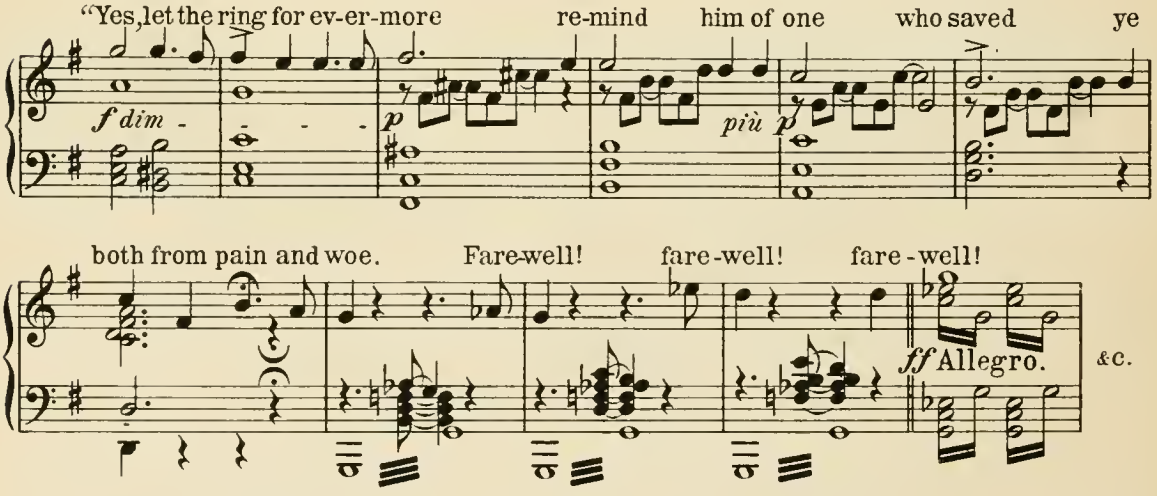
The power of passing-notes for pathos may easily be shewn by reharmonising the Grieg example above without any; or, if that be deemed a sacrilege, by comparing the following two versions of a Russian melody (modern, so we need not mind.)




The sad feeling of the melody itself remains unchanged, but how washed-out and faded is the harmony of the second version compared with the first!

The major key, although lending itself less readily to pathetic effect than the minor, can be made, in skilful hands, to yield unexpected stores of feeling. *"Che faro"* is entirely in the major:

Lohengrin's farewell modulates adroitly into minor keys, but gets its strongest effects from the suspended $4^{ths}$ and $9^{ths}$:


"Yes, let the ring for ev-er-more re-mind him of one who saved ye
f dim -
p
più p
both from pain and woe. Fare-well! fare-well! fare-well!
ff Allegro.
&c.

The minor chromatic discords produce an even greater effect in the major key than in the minor: witness the passage in Tschaikowsky's *Pathetic:*

By the way, it is interesting to observe that these bars were anticipated by Bizet in that very pathetic solo of *Don José* in the second act of *Carmen*.

Tschaikowsky may be accused of being *too* lavish with the resources of pathetic effect in his last movement (but he always lays on his colour with a trowel). Not only the chief subject

but in the tremendous chain of suspensions that follows,

and then, in the second subject, where (as in Chopin's Funeral March) it tries to breathe resignation, the continuous falling seconds are quite harrowing in their grief:

This may be all right for the public, but the musician who *knows* would have preferred a little more subtlety and restraint here. To use a vulgar but graphic phrase, it rather "gives the show away", by allowing the mechanism to become apparent. *Ars vera est celare artem* is an aphorism more applicable to music than to any other form of art.

All falling dissonances are to some extent pathetic, but those of frequent occurence, like the Dominant Seventh and the ordinary form of appoggiatura, naturally seem less characteristic because the ear is so used to them. The ordinary composer is apt to put in any nice Eleventh or Thirteenth he happens to light on, regardless of whether he needs a poignant spasm of misery or not, and only the real artist is capable of discarding beautiful things because they are not to the purpose.

That ingenious Russian composer, Rébikoff, has written an interesting little piece which he calls *Tristesse: étude psychologique pour piano.* In this, by a persistent employment of the resources I have here indicated, he has achieved a very singular result. The piece is spoilt by monotony of style – a common fault with this writer – a syncopated quaver accompaniment, which at first suggests sobs, becoming quite tiresome so as to neutralise the weird ending, but the emotional colour is quite extraordinary. I quote a few of the opening bars, by which the style may be gathered.

One warning to the composer: there is a well-known violin piece, the Capriccio in A minor by Niels Gade, beginning

which is intended to be brilliant and showy; but, owing to the injudicious use of minor key and falling minor seconds in prominent cadences, is really quite dismal to listen to. It is a striking example of a piece coming out quite differently to what the composer desired, through an unlucky choice of phrase. It should be useful to the student to observe the fatal result of the "never alter what you have once written" notion and the necessity for having a definite knowledge of the technique of emotional expression.

## Patriotism – Martial Ardour.

A very little will arouse it - that universal, silly martial pride of ours. What a thrill used to run through the house when, in *L'Enfant prodigue,* the distant drum announced the approaching troop and entirely transformed the little blackguard into a hero!

One can understand the historical associations of *La Marseillaise,* the *Rakóczy march,* or even *Yankee Doodle* awaking this thrill, but in England we are so oddly constituted that any tune associated with the army will stir the puny heart of our peaceful proletariat and warm it with this cheap vanity.

Technically, we have to observe that the essential feature in such moments is a nicely moving bass (tonic and dominant see - saw - wise is the favourite) exactly in marching time, the harmony never crossing the beat, but changing crisply with it. The least indication of trumpet rhythm in one of the upper parts adds mightily to the effect, and as there are generally words one cannot very easily go wrong.

## Peace – Repose.

To convey such sentiments as these we should naturally require soft slow music (heavenly peace high up: earthly peace low down) with the minimum of movement in the accompaniment. A tonic pedal is therefore the instinctive resource of even the least experienced. Unfortunately this effect is so often employed without any special intention and through mere ineptitude that it is losing its power over the imagination. The composer must beware of using any but the simplest discords over his pedal, or he will destroy the feeling of serenity and substitute that of grief or pain. There is a Berceuse by Tschaikowsky for piano which is very soft and quiet, but suggests indigestious pangs rather than peaceful slumber.

The tonic pedal is by no means our only resource: provided that concords are in the majority and the harmonic progressions natural and smooth we need not adhere to the Tonic. Schubert's song *Meeresstille* and Grieg's hymn "Peace" are good examples. Soft sustained harmony of Strings – preferably not muted – conveys in a magical manner the sentiment of repose in the Orchestra. The opening bars of Mendelssohn's Overture *Meeresstille* are typical.

## Romance - Sentiment.

Sir George Grove discusses, in his Dictionary, the subject of Romanticism in music and considers it to consist in some unexpected beauty being suddenly thrust upon the ear. I agree with this definition, but the excellent author fails to perceive that it is the growth of harmony that gave inevitable birth to what is spoken of as the Romantic School and rendered possible not only the typical examples which he quotes from Schubert and Beethoven, but all and every atom of emotional music. It is impossible to decide whether any particular example is to be called Romantic, Sentimental, Mawkish or Sickening. This will always be a matter of individual taste, and therefore alterable as time goes on. But the essence of the romantic and sentimental feeling seems to lie in that deft sliding out of and back into the key which modern harmony can effect, and our admiration of the skill and freshness with which we deem the trick to have been performed must be commensurate with our experience in such matters. Here are a few examples:

Andante.
Spohr – Faust.
Far a - way to peace-ful mea - dows will I
p
cresc.
pp
fol - low thee, my love, will I fol - low thee, my love!
Andantino.
Bizet – Carmen.
pp rall.
And I am thine and thine a - lone
pp
pp a piacere
Carmen, I love thee.
ppp
Andante.
Schumann – Du bist wie eine Blume.
p
rit.
Largo.
Chopin – B minor Sonata.
tr
tr
dim.

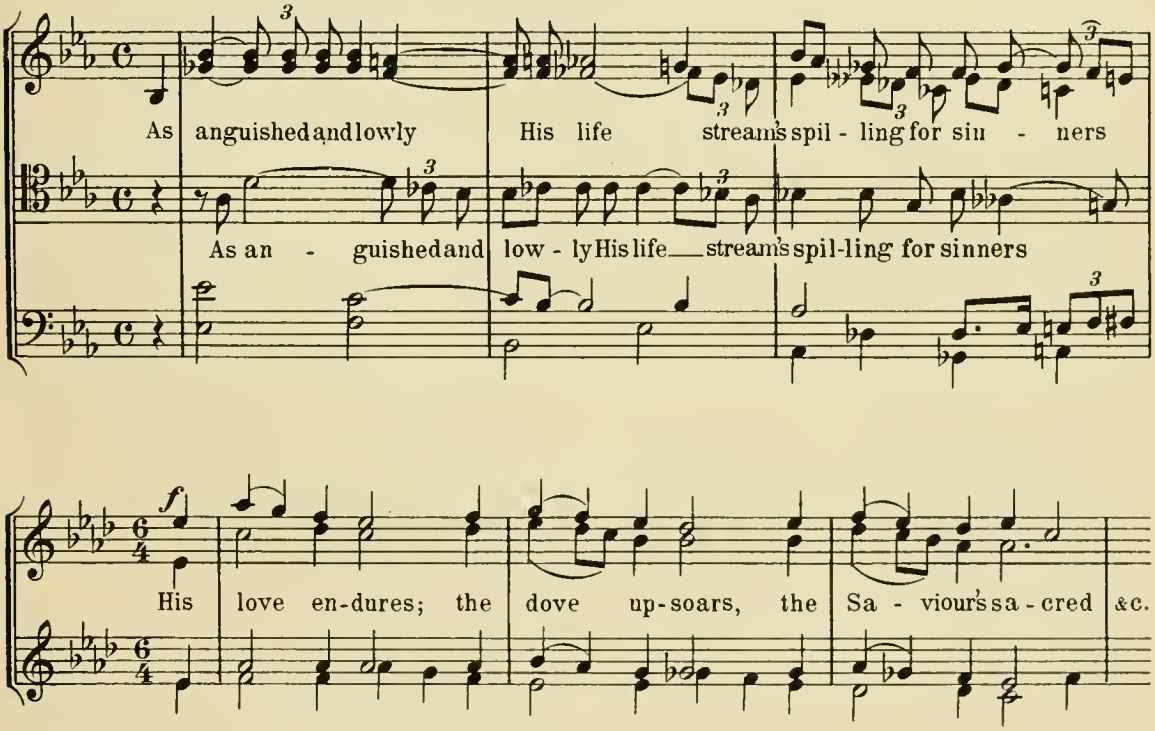
## Sacred Music.

It is very important that the writer of sacred music should have a clear idea of what differentiates it from secular music. A really religious-minded composer would not only desire to put more earnestness into his sacred than into his secular work, but would also seek to employ a phraseology in the former distinct from that of the latter. But "wishing" is of little avail without knowledge of means, and he must first of all decide in what this distinction is to consist. The most suitable idiom and the easiest to employ without affectation is an archaic style with a slight infusion of present-day sentiment. The archaic style seems in keeping with that antiquity of spoken language, which (rightly or wrongly) we feel appropriate to religious matters. It is, however, very apt to involve dulness and a perfunctory character, especially if we venture to employ anything like hymn-tunes or the cadences thereof. The infusion of modern feeling (*i. e.* a few modern harmonies and cadences) is necessary to give warmth and sincerity to the work. Very much sacred music by old writers seems so trite and mechanical that it is hard to believe that the composers can have ever felt the importance of their task; so dull that one wonders why it survives and is played.

After all, this is a case where the technical teacher has little to say but to bid the pupil either be deeply sincere or let the matter alone. The shop anthem and the shop cantata are the crimes – the unpardonable crimes – of musical art.

For contemporary models I bid the student know well the works of Mackenzie, Parry, Elgar and also the beautiful *Weihnachts-mysterium* of Wolfrum.

Beware how you write modern harmony for chorus: compare the two choruses in *Parsifal:*

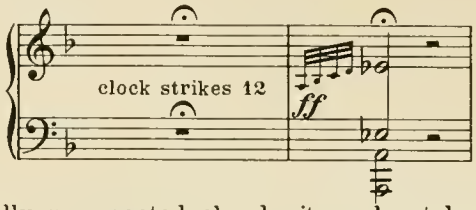

As anguished and lowly His life stream's spil-ling for sin-ners
As an-guished and low-ly His life stream's spil-ling for sinners
His love en-dures; the dove up-soars, the Sa-viour's sa-cred &c.

the first has never yet been sung in tune and probably never will be, while the second is absolutely divine in its effect.

## Storm-Terror.

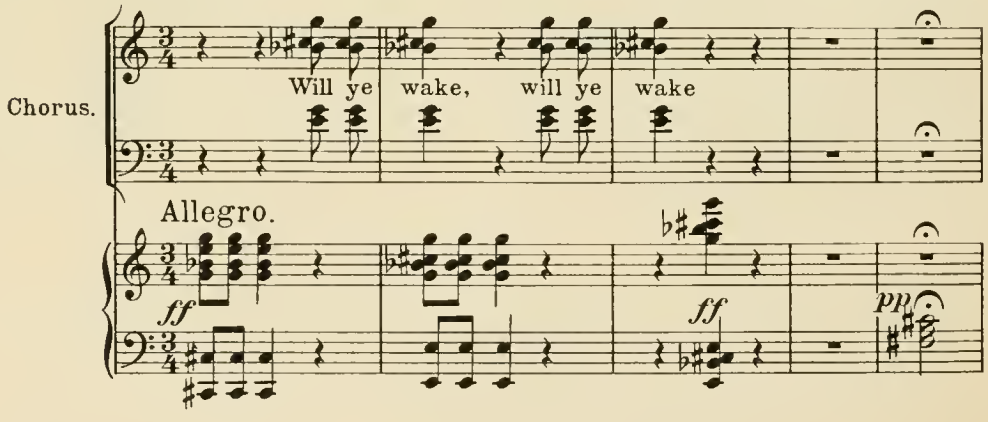
In the matter of Storm-music all I have to say is that it is a pity so many composers rest content with making a noise. The two best specimens of storm-music ever written—Beethoven's in the Pastoral Symphony and Wagner's Prelude to *Die Walküre*— are finely constructed movements and certainly lose no whit of impressiveness from that fact. Music that tries to be only colour can never live.

As for Terror, the devices employed to depict Agitation are all suitable here also, only in an intensified degree. But sudden shocks to the ear are also demanded. The most thrilling moment in that grand picture of terror – the Wolf's Glen scene in *Der Freischütz*– is when Caspar commences his weird proceedings and the music suddenly goes –




The sound of a wholly unexpected chord – it need not be an extravagant one – can send a thrill of terror through the hearer. Think of Verdi's effect in his *Requiem,* when he breaks in on the bass solo "Oro supplex" –

or Wagner's, in Act III of the Flying Dutchman, when the Norwegian sailors challenge the Dutch crew to join their revelry and for response get only silence and a blood-curdling chord in the orchestra:




## Yearning-Pleading.

As the falling second is the essence of pathos so the rising second is the essence of hope—aspiration. Observe the character of the two phrases which go to make up the subject of the famous Prelude to *Tristan:*

or the theme which runs through *Brangäne's* remonstrance with her lady:

or again, in the great love-scene in *Die Walküre*, notice the yearning, aspiring effect of the oft-repeated insistent figure –

Perhaps the best example of all is the phrase – a favourite with Wagner – made from the "Changing notes." Taken from above, so that the whole phrase falls (though the last notes rise) we get extreme pathos:

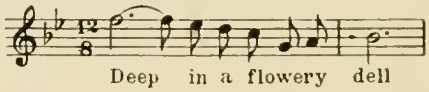
**Parsifal**
Act I. Sc. II.

but when this is inverted we get an intensely aspiring sentiment:

**Tristan**
Act II.

The contents of this chapter will very likely have shocked the minds of those who believe that "expression," whether in composition or performance, can be achieved by merely endeavouring to conjure up in oneself the particular emotion required. Six months on the stage would do more to cure them of this delusion than any words of mine, and they would then learn that feeling and pourtraying emotion are two very different things. I confine myself to pointing out that whatever is done by human beings requires mechanical means for its achievment. You cannot write music that will sound pathetic or joyous, agitated or tranquil, without employing some resource in the one that you do not in the other, though you turn your eyes up till they crack.* And, at the risk of being wearisome, I repeat that these and all other technical resources must be first employed consciously, and when really learnt they will become sub-conscious and instinctive. Only then will the composer be able to endow his music with any desired character by a mere general exercise of his volition.

* I remember Macfarren telling me how a storm of derision was evoked by John Barnett ignoring these principles so far as to begin a song in his *Mountain Sylph* thus:



# Chapter X.

# RESOURCES - ORIGINALITY.

Composition has been aptly defined as "the utilisation of resources." Certainly the merit of a composer lies entirely in his knowledge of the multifarious resources of his art and his power to employ them. It is not enough to have "gone through a course" of Harmony and Counterpoint; an extensive knowledge of other men's works is necessary to give some insight into the possibilities in any particular branch. Writers of ballads and shop - pieces do not require this; works of that class remaining with much the same scope from one generation to another. But if one wishes to write for chorus it behoves one not only to know what are the possible and impossible things for a choir, but also to know what has been done already – what effects are stale and what have been less exploited. In a future volume I hope to give some assistance to the young composer by indicating the characteristics of all different kinds of music and how these are manifested, but this will only be useful to direct his mind towards certain channels: moreover, it will quickly get out of date: it is for each one to *take thought* and treasure up experience for himself. Sir George Macfarren used to tell us how he had once to write an Overture for an amateur band consisting of 12 violins, 7 flutes and a bass – or some such outrageous collection of instruments. He had to invent special effects for them. Now, whether you write a Concerto for three pianos, or a septet for trombones or anything merely normal, there will always be problems to solve and I must suppose the student to have some intelligence and initiative. Instruction books are useless to those artistic minds which move with feminine lack of continuity. The reasoning creature will, I hope, see that I am endeavouring to lead him through paths of conscious labour to the acquirement of a true sub - conscious ability which is a far higher possession than the mere instinct for music.

The young man of what is called natural talent is so apt to pour out ideas (and especially to pour out beautiful harmonies) in a kind of intoxicated rapture, and he is sadly offended if one points out to him that this is no more really clever than the aimless rambling of the second-class organist when "playing the congregation in." Extemporisation is not composition, and only too many musicians are unaware of the fact.

To recapitulate, then: before starting a composition of any kind lay down clearly in your mind – if not on paper – your full intentions in the matter. Is it to be a Sonata for one or two instruments, a Quartet, a Concerto or a Song? *Why* is it to be either? Each has its own conditions, limitations, special resources and difficulties, which you must know something about. Get as much subject matter, ideas for the themes, effects, passages, climaxes – as possible written down without thought of immediate context. Much will turn out unsuitable or unavailable: learn to sacrifice your most cherished fancies remorselessly if they are unsuitable to, or incongruous with the general scheme. Above all, get the character and general effect clear first, so as to work to that and think of the actual commencement last as being the easiest and least important point. Having laboriously roughed out the piece and made the joins seem fairly natural, the best plan then is to tear up what you have done and re - write it (like *Walther* with his *Preislied)* having regard only to detail and artistic finish. But how few will consent to take this trouble! Most people are satisfied if there are no glaring faults visible (or audible). The words "Good enough" should find no place in the true artist's vocabulary.

## Originality.

At this point I fancy I hear the reader saying: "But all this toil and trouble cannot avail if one has not true originality; it will only enable one to write *Kapellmeistermusik*, which nobody wants."

Is that so? Let us consider what this objection really means. The commonest of all delusions – one which it is hopeless to combat in the true amateur – is that the world's great artists – Beethoven – Liszt – Paganini – Raffael – Shakespeare – were never taught,

but came into the world fully fledged, always absolutely perfect and beyond criticism. This is just as foolish as the fancy we all have (only we know it to be a foolish fancy) that these men were always the same age as we see them in their pictures and never ate their dinners, or got tipsy, or undressed to bathe, or what not. The ignorant person, you see, cannot realise the process or the results of teaching – cannot imagine that there are steps leading up to every result that he sees before him: he has a vague belief – which he sometimes even utters – that "All this *so-called* teaching does no real good." To this the sneer about *Kapellmeistermusik* is the corollary. That scornful term (which corresponds to our critics' favourite spiteful epithet "Academic") is often applied by these superficial minds to music which they find uninteresting at a first hearing, but they never seem to suspect that the fault may lie with themselves.

The real "Academic" music is that of Cherubini, Hummel and many another of the old and venerated writers – music the composer of which has *not tried to do anything new*, but has contented himself with filling up a formula. The man who can bring himself to be satisfied with this has the soul of a tradesman: he has no more idea of art than those retired sailors who build a model of something entirely out of corks or cotton-reels.

Those for whom everything in the universe is either black or white consider that there are about half a dozen truly inspired artists in the world and that all the rest are of no account. This is a very convenient way of passing off their limited acquaintance with the long roll of great men, but even more sensible people require to be reminded that none of those whom they consider "truly original artists" began by being so. The early works of the great are not always accessible; it is only natural that they should be hidden from the world and destroyed, but it is only too certain that Shakespeare had to learn his alphabet, that Paganini took years before he could play in tune and that Beethoven wrote as badly in his school-days (in this case we have his exercise-books to prove it) as any Royal Academy student. Further, that nearly all of these great men reached middle life before their originality was made manifest. Wagner's early efforts are distressing in their crudity – even the precocious Mendelssohn is said to have written twelve Symphonies before his first published one, which is not yet the true Mendelssohn.*

I argue from this that without having been taught no one is anything at all, although some few are intelligent enough to act as their own teachers. Further, that it is our duty to study to the utmost of our powers, and even then, on looking back we shall always have the unpleasant conviction that we could still have done better had we tried harder.

For, remember! In art there is no finality: every work, from the feeble amateur song quoted in this book up to Bach's B minor Mass or Wagner's *Parsifal*, could have still been improved by the taking of still more thought and labour to it.

As to actual distinction and originality of style, this is always far more a result of conscious reason than a mere intuition, or instinct. For, to be original does not mean that you are to do eccentric things: it only means that by the exercise of superior thought and knowledge you replace stale conventions by newer ones.

Finally, let not the beginner be discouraged over the clumsiness and sluggishness of his invention. This is a drawback very common in the early stages, but one which time, and time alone, will remove. One lacks the courage to write down easy futilities, and the great things that one dreams of (or thinks one dreams of) refuse to come. If you would only believe – if you *could* only believe – how little the *matter* matters and how much the *manner!* Study, study, study! By the time you have acquired the manner the matter will be less shy of approach, and *then* the only fear is that you will be lacking in self-criticism, in which case alas for originality!

* Did not Beethoven, when in later years he saw his first published Trio, say: "O Beethoven, Beethoven! What an ass you were in those days!"?

## Postscript.

I have here achieved the record feat of writing a book on music without once using the word "Genius."

In the sense in which this word is usually employed it is a myth, though devoutly cherished by the ignorant.

The amateur loves to regard the composer as a kind of pump, into which God pours a mystic fluid, called "Inspiration," while someone else works the handle.

That fluid has no existence: the pump, alas! has.

The educated person learns to perceive that there are infinite gradations of EAR, of ZEAL, and of INTELLIGENCE, and that however slightly endowed with either of these qualities, you can cultivate and improve it *without limit.* With either one of these cultivated to a high degree you are a Clever Person; with any two ditto you are said to have a Talent; with all three completely developed—a combination that has never yet occurred, though many think it has—you would be a Genius.

The amateur's creed flies in the face of all evidence: mine is the result of a life-long experience; but I do not expect it to be accepted any the more for that.

*F. C.*

# APPENDIX.

## Exercises on Chap. I.

1. Words for a light lyrical song. This might have all the verses alike, but would need a change at the end.

### A DIFFERENCE.

The air is chill upon the hill,
The landscape dull and plain;
How vexes me from yonder tree
That bird's persistent strain!

Before the day *he* went away
All nature seemed to smile.
Now sullen gloom destroys her bloom
And clouds her face defile.

A step I hear approaching near;
O joy! my love I hail.
How warm the air, the view how fair!
Sing on, sweet nightingale!

2. Words for a more serious, characteristic song.

### IN ABSENCE.

At morning when I leave thy side
And think of day's long hours of pain
I cry "Return, O eventide
And bring me to my love again".

Throughout the empty, crowded day
Thy parting words ring in my ear;
My ev'ry sense they hold in sway;
No other voice but thine I hear.

Their sounds upon my spirit grate,
Yet they abide within my soul,
Like bells that on the air vibrate
Long after they have ceased to toll.

3. Words for a more elaborate vocal piece.

### LET ME GO HENCE.

Let me go hence like summer evening's breath,
Like sunset's fading flush upon the ocean.
O imperceptible and blissful death
Fulfilled with beauty as a last emotion!

Let me go hence as doth the starry train,
With smile unfading — with no tears to banish;
Immoveable and undisturbed by pain,
In blue immensities of space to vanish.

Let me go hence like perfume of the flow'rs,
Which struggles into freedom wild and flighty;
Then on the wings of teeming Zephyr tow'rs
Like incense to the feet of the Almighty.

Let me go hence like the harmonious sound
Of instruments compliant to the fingers,
When, ere the quiv'ring string has ceased to bound,
Sweet music on the gladdened spirit lingers.

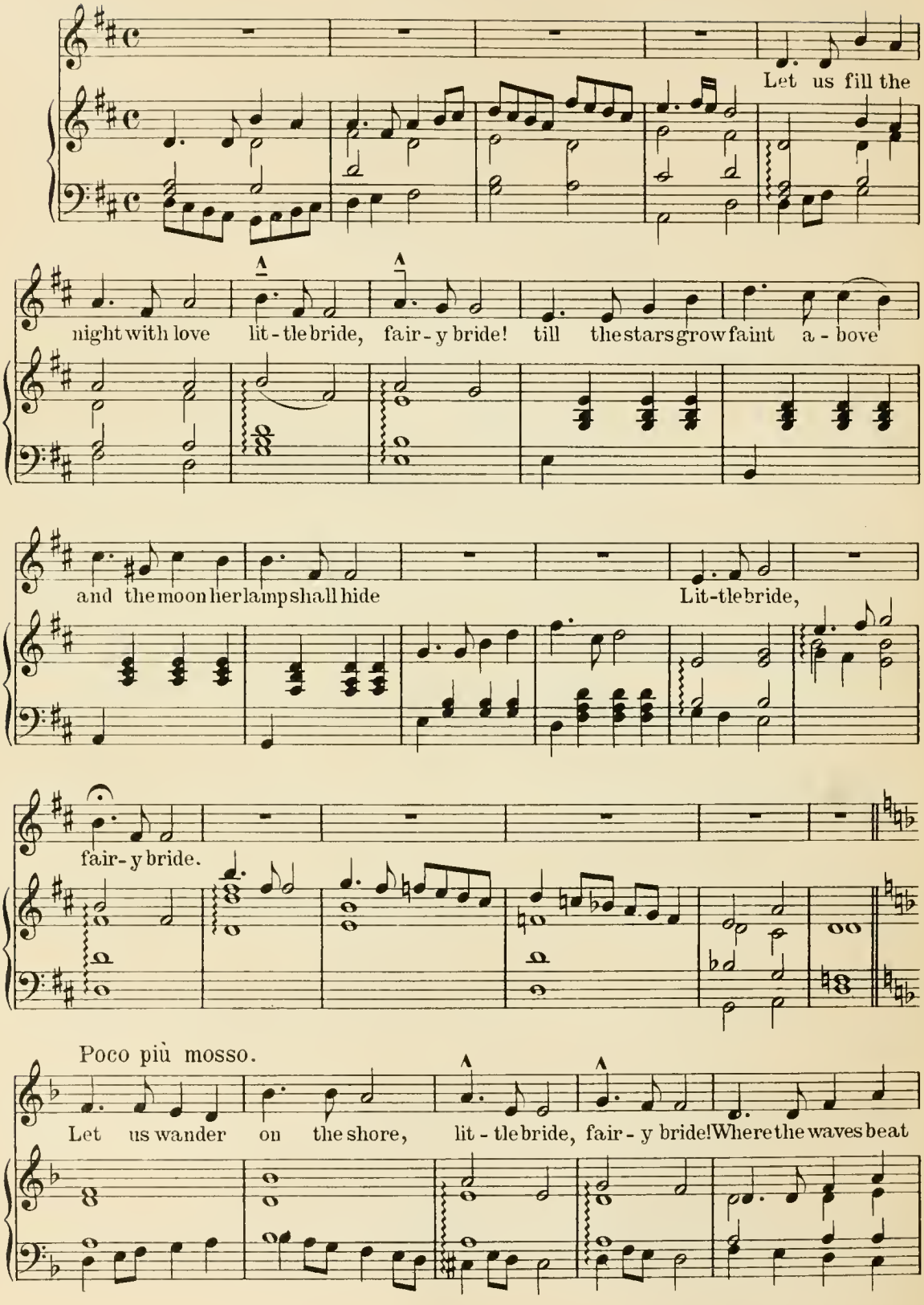
Thou shalt not fade like sunset from the sky,
Nor languish like the starry constellation;
Not thine to perish as the roses die;
No music shall afford thee consolation.

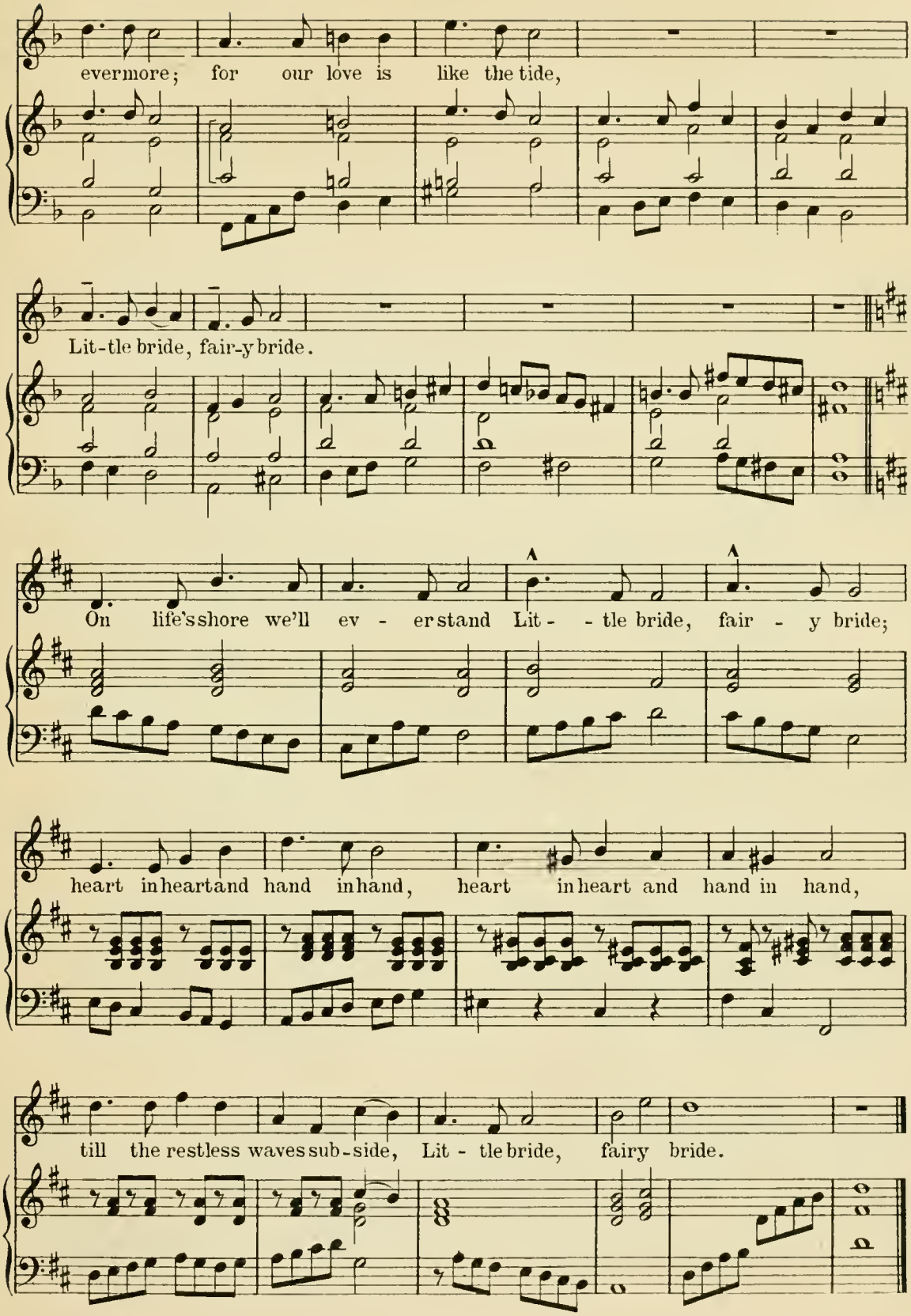
Thou shalt go hence indeed and leave no trace;
But not till pain shall give her final token.
Ere hapless man may seek a resting place
God wills his heart must piece by piece be broken.

(These words may be used by anyone: they are adaptations by N. C. Hill from various early poets.)

4. The following song is the first crude effort of a student. Criticize it to your teacher and, if possible amend it.

# Little Bride!


Let us fill the
night with love lit-tle bride, fair-y bride! till the stars grow faint a-bove
and the moon her lamp shall hide
Lit-tle bride,
fair-y bride.
Poco più mosso.
Let us wander on the shore, lit-tle bride, fair-y bride! Where the waves beat


evermore; for our love is like the tide,
Lit-tle bride, fair-y bride.
On life's shore we'll ev - er stand Lit - - tle bride, fair - y bride;
heart in heart and hand in hand, heart in heart and hand in hand,
till the restless waves sub-side, Lit - tle bride, fairy bride.

## Exercises on Chap. II.

1. Supply the bars requisite to bring each of the following musical ideas to a close, not necessarily in the tonic key.

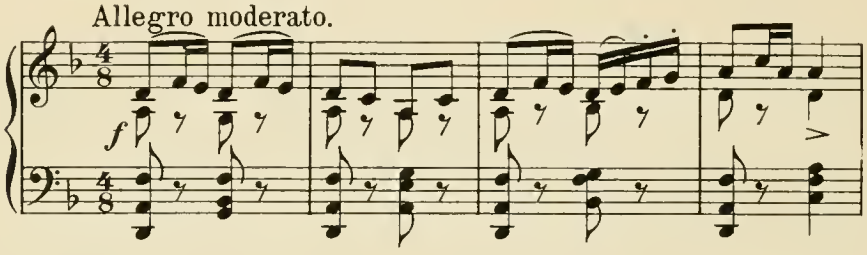
2. Furnish a second strain, or a new idea to serve as a continuation and complete the piece.

Allegretto scherzando.

1.

Allegro moderato.

2.




Andante tranquillo.

3.

Allegretto grazioso.

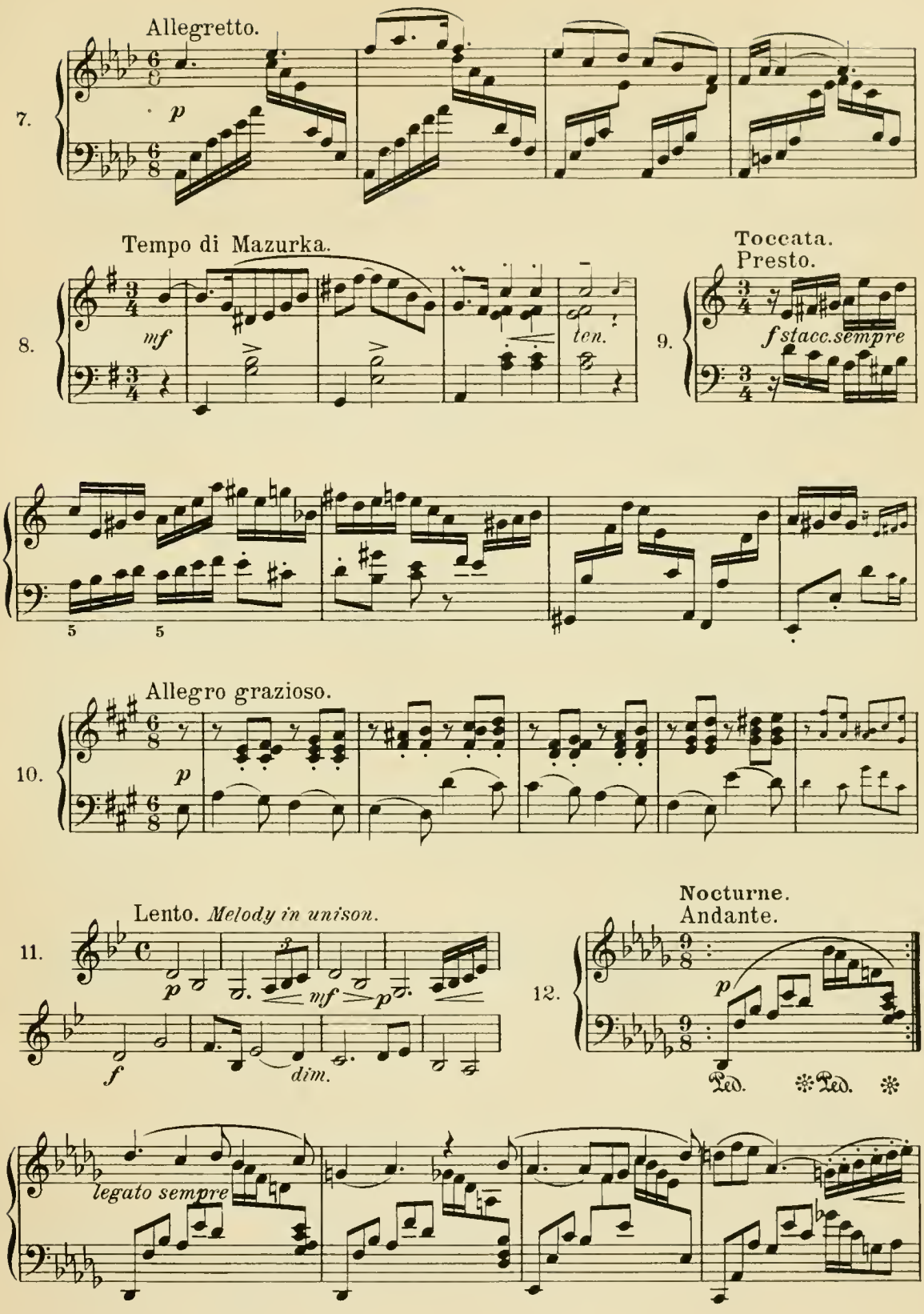
4.

Alla marcia.

5.

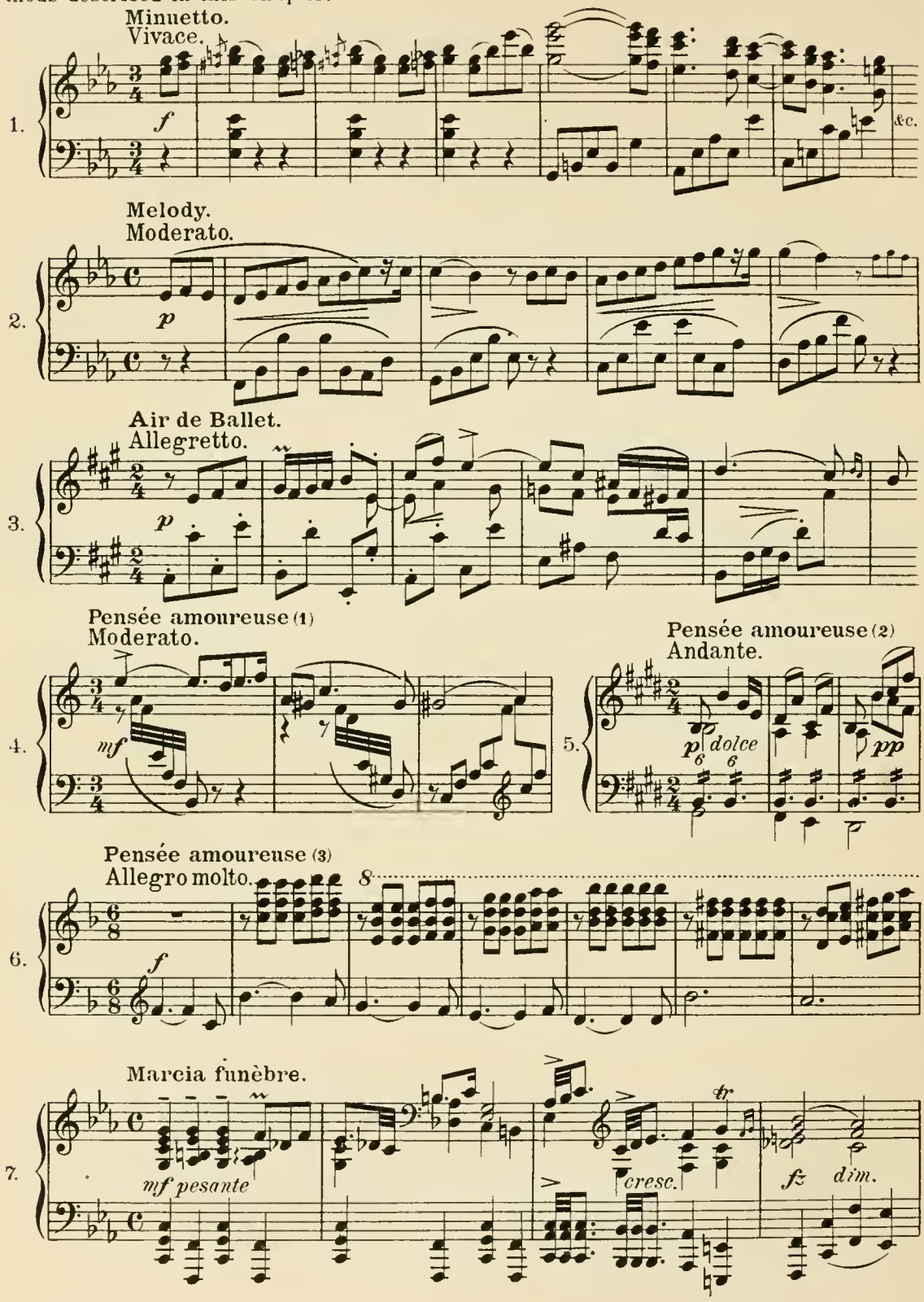
Andante.

6.


Allegretto.
7.
p
Tempo di Mazurka.
8.
mf
ten.
Toccata.
Presto.
9.
f stacc. sempre
5
5
Allegro grazioso.
10.
p
Lento. Melody in unison.
11.
p
mf
p
f
dim.
Nocturne.
Andante.
12.
p
Ped.
Ped.
legato sempre

# Exercises on Chap. III.

Continue the following themes not always in regular rhythm, according to the methods described in this chapter.



## Exercises on Chap. IV.

Continue the following themes to at least double their present length without any mere repetition and without bringing them to a full close.

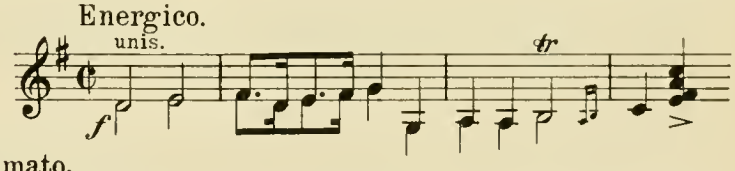
1. Dramatic Overture, or first movement of a Sonata.

2. Jubilant Overture.

3. For an energetic movement; a Finale to a Symphony, or the like.

4. For a light Overture, or bustling movement.

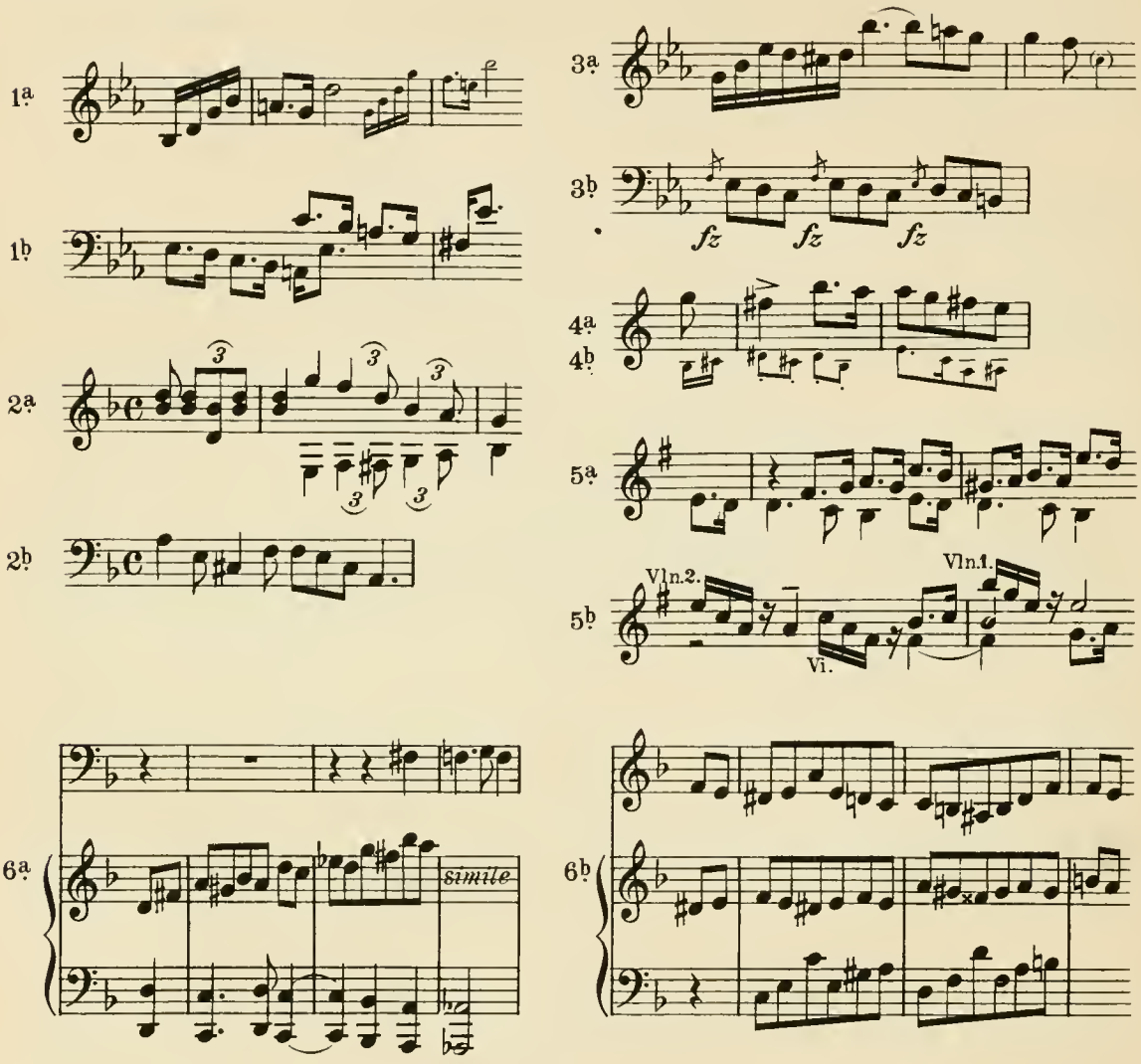
5. For a String Quartett.



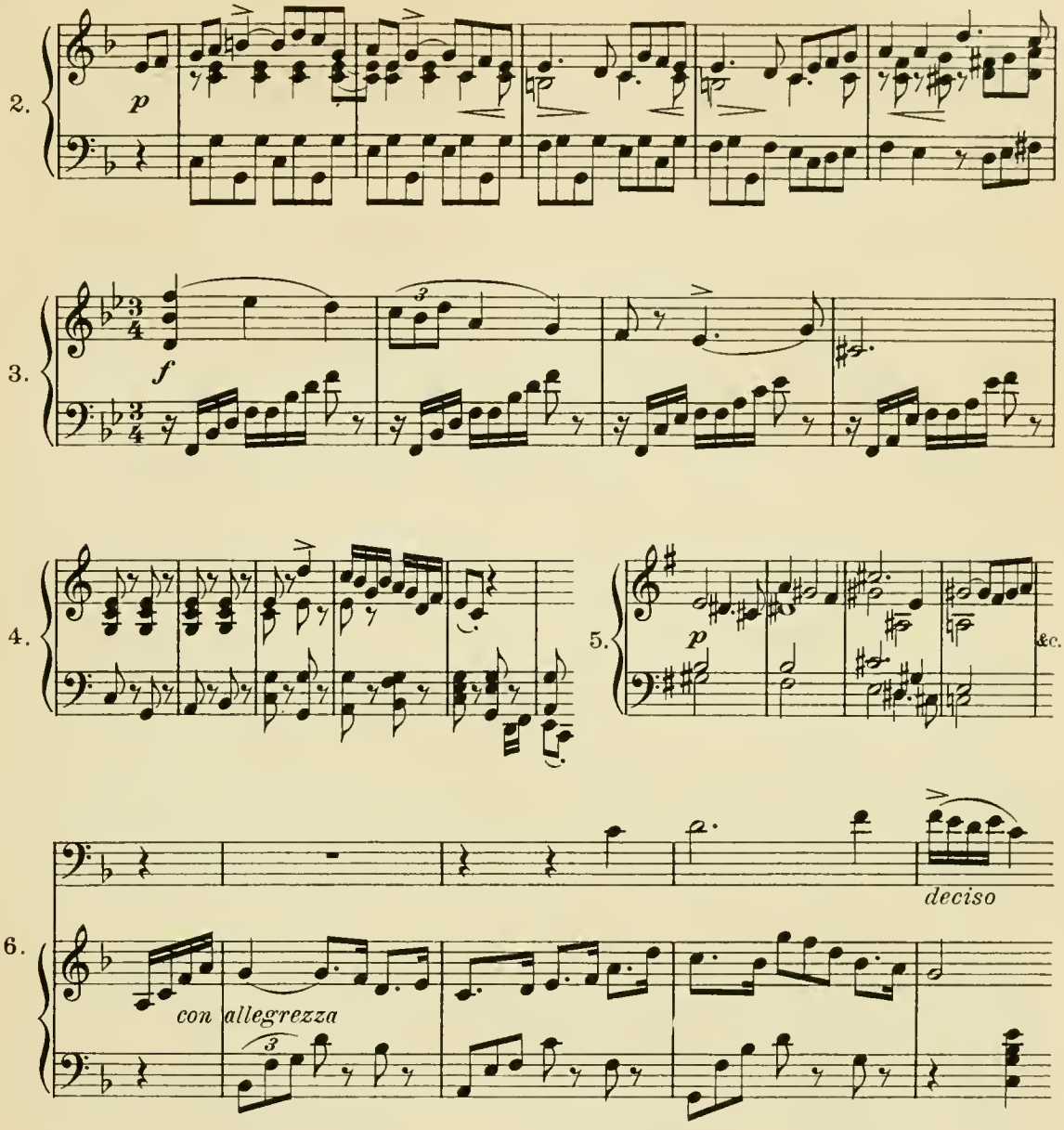

6. For a Trio or Cello Sonata.

## Exercises on Chap. V.

1. To any of the extended versions of the themes given above add "bridge-passages" or subsidiary matter formed from the following figures, contriving to lead to the dominant of a suitable key for a second subject.




2. The following are suggestions for second subjects, which may then follow. These may either be considerably extended or supplemented by fresh matter.




3. To any of the above which have been successfully brought thus far a development section might now be added, followed by a more or less modified recapitulation.

## Exercises on Chap. VI.

To any of the movements so far constructed write — if they will admit of it — *two alternative* Codas; one vigorous and loud, the other quiet. This, which you probably could not or would not do to an original work, will be found a useful and interesting exercise where the material is by some one else.

# Exercises to Chap. VII.

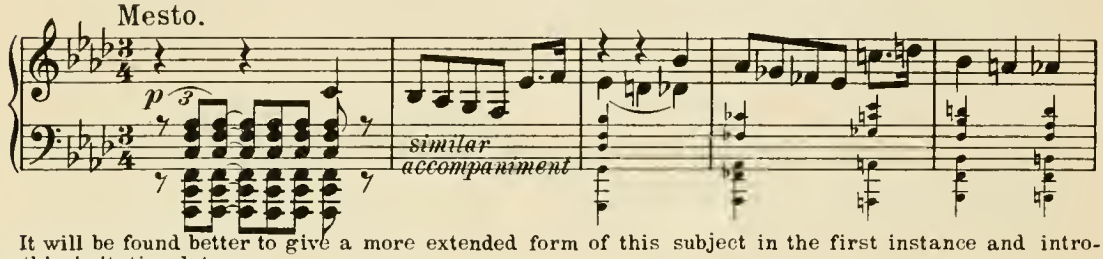
1. The following themes suitable for slow movements should now be continued and supplied with episodical matter by the student.

Largo appassionato.

(On the subsequent repetition the Bass of the 4th bar might be A♭.)

Andante espressivo.

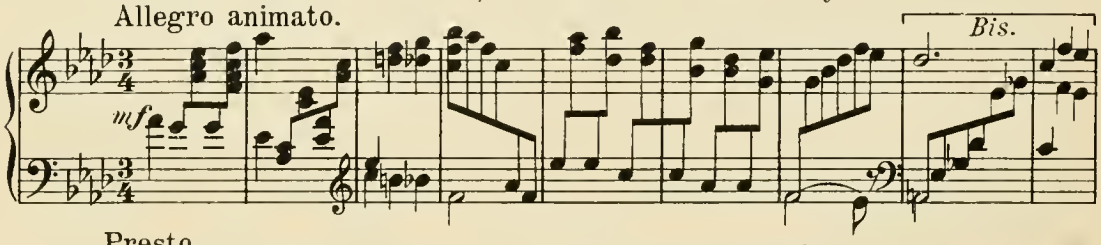
Mesto.




It will be found better to give a more extended form of this subject in the first instance and introduce this imitation later.

2. Themes for Scherzos and Finales, to be used in the same way.

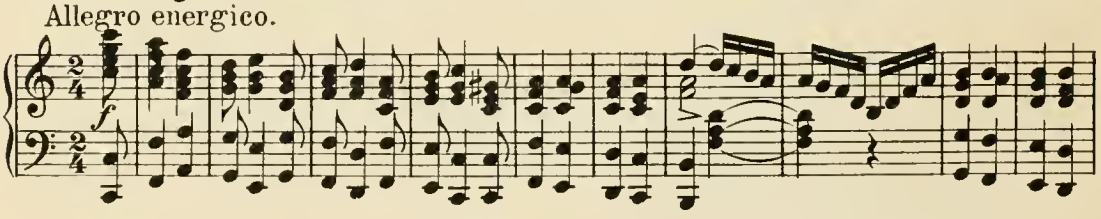
Allegro animato.




Presto.

Allegro con fuoco.

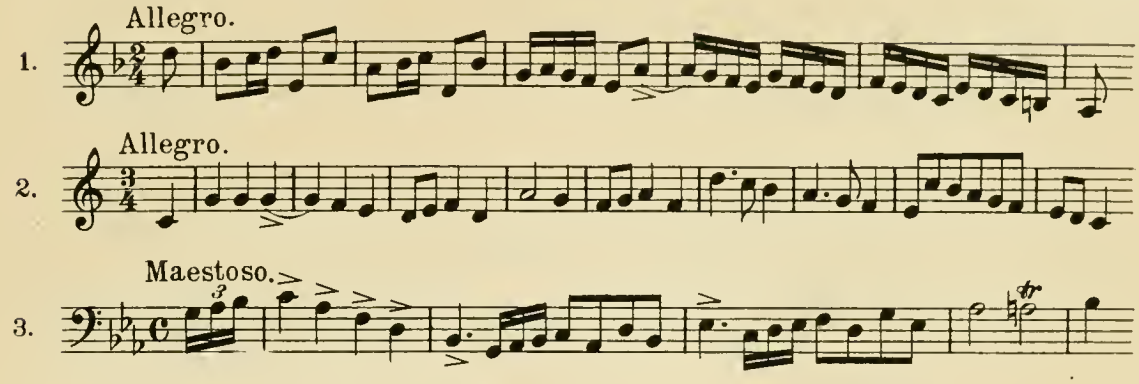
Allegro energico.




3. Introductions should now be added to any of the completed movements to which they may seem desirable. Here the student's invention should need no prompting.

## Exercises on Chap. VIII.

1. Fugue-subjects, to which as many invertible counter-subjects as possible should be invented before attempting to write the fugues.




2. Write a Prelude — a continuous piece with one subject — upon either of the following.

3. Write Variations on the following themes.

Moderato.

Norwegian Air.

Andante mesto.

Scotch Air.

Allegretto.

"My Mistress" Thos. Mace, 1670.

Allegro.

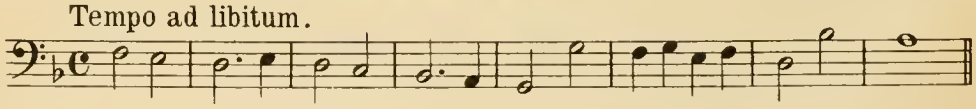
"L'Homme armé" Old French, 1500.

Moderato.

Irish Air.

Tempo ad libitum.

Ground bass or Passacaglia.



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